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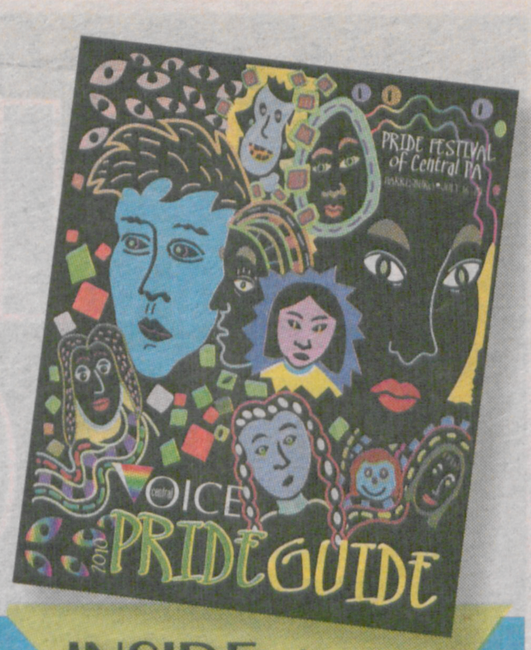
central VOICE

FREE **Special Pride Edition** JULY/AUGUST 2010



INSIDE: the official PrideGuide ~2010

Fierce & Fearless

By Chris Azzopardi

Inside the rock legend's life now – her personal awakening and how it's changed everything

If Melissa Etheridge's music has seemed mellow lately, she's about to show you. Back to her rock-out roots, the tough-and-gruff musician/mother/activist makes a roaring return with the uplifting "Fearless Love", her follow-up to 2007's sociopolitical-powered "The Awakening".

We spoke with Etheridge, who not only discussed surviving cancer during the last decade and the life lessons she learned in the process, but also how she's embracing change – a new sound, touring band and the return of those hot, long locks.

How does it feel to have the long hair back?

I watered it every day, and it grew! It was a big part of me. I really wasn't aware how big a part.

I'm not used to seeing you as glammed-up as you've been in some recent photos. What's up with all the make-up?

You know, it's something I think I've grown into. At 48, I need all the help I can get (laughs).

continued on page 15

Gay Literature at Street Level

"I see the work of our queer writers, publishers, editors, librarians, in the context of a larger struggle for queer liberation and rights."
~Tony Valenzuela

By Frank Pizzoli

The love that dare not speak its name has millions of words to tell its story.

As publishing markets writhe through economic contractions, readers, independent booksellers, and literary organizations meet on the same page. Even though gay readers last year lost two venerable institutions, New York City's Oscar Wilde Bookstore and West Hollywood's A Different Light Bookstore, they still clamor to read.

Within the region interested parties convene through a shared affinity for a good book.

Lambda Literary Foundation, its Lambda Book Report dubbed "the New York Times Book Review for gay readers," sets the pace annually with its prestigious Lambda Literary Awards. This year's recipients were the topic of local librarian Lewis Maurer's regular column last month (Link: thecentralvoice.ning.com, see Lambda Literary in News Window).

Gay-themed books are discussed regularly within the region in book clubs organized by the LGBT Community Center Coalition. Book reviews, and Maurer's column, are a regular feature of Central Voice.

Keeping abreast of change, the Lambda Literary Foundation "has a new mission that more succinctly articulates what has always been our primary charge," explains new executive director Tony Valenzuela.

The foundation "nurtures, celebrates, and preserves lgbt literature through programs that honor excellence, promote visibility and encourage development of emerging writers," Valenzuela says. These basic goals have remained unchanged from the time Deacon Maccubbin founded the organization through Lambda Rising Bookstore in Washington, D.C. more than 22 years ago.

The most visible change at the foundation is a new website.

continued on page 22

PrideFest 2010

Do ask. Do tell.

One thing you can say about Central PA Pride Festival's weekend-long event – there's something for everyone. With an event mission of "One World, One Goal, Equality for All," the 5,000-plus attendee event covers it all. All details in Pride Guide inside.

If you're an activist, there's a forum on *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* by Capital Region Stonewall Democrats.

If you're spiritual, there's a Pride Shabbat at Temple Beth Shalom July 16.

If you like choral music, there's the popular Voices United Concert July 23. That same night there's a pre-Pride Party at Liquid 891.

July 24 the PrideFest Unity Parade kicks-off at 11 a.m. and the event itself runs from noon to 5 p.m. along the Susquehanna River. The Official Post-Pride Party takes place later that evening at York's Club XS.

July 25 Spirits United closes out the busy weekend.

One World, One Goal, Equality for All.

MORE:

EqualityPA names Martin
see p. 7

ACLU talks
see p. 10

PRIDE FESTIVAL OF CENTRAL PA

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Local Memoir Writers Share Excerpts

Michelle Simmons

Those who've written memoirs have left pages stained with more than ink.

Gay icon Armistead Maupin says "I have always distrusted memoir. I tend to write my memoirs through my fiction. It's easier to get to the truth by not claiming that you are speaking it. Some things can be said in fiction that can never be said in memoir."

Bill Clinton says of his memoir "I hope mine is interesting and self-serving."

Augusten Burroughs says "With my own memoirs, they are truthful, and I write everything fully expecting to some day end up televised on Court TV, and I'm fully prepared to be challenged legally on it."

Publishing analyst Michael Cader reported 295 memoirs signed by publishers in 2007, compared with 227 debut novels and 214 memoirs in 2006. For 2007, memoirs accounted for 12.5% of non-fiction deals, up from 10% in 2006 and 9% in 2005. Although numbers are steady the loud explosion is in how authors' market their books. Multi-level marketing is the game – web sites, Twitter, Facebook, snail mail post cards, book signings, and specialty publications like Central Voice.

Six participants who recently completed a memoir writing course taught by writer Michelle Simmons share excerpts. The seminar was sponsored by the LGBT Community Center Coalition.

Imprinted Memories

By Deborah Gable

I don't remember a lot of things about my life.

Some people seem to have such precise recollections of past experiences. A college friend of mine is always surprised by gaps in my memory of things we had done together during our time at Penn State. I have another friend who remembers exquisite details of the years we worked together as youth counselors at an employment program. My sister, on the other hand, is more like me.

Usually I don't feel too bad about my not remembering. But I recently realized that I don't remember what I did with my mother when I was growing up. As my own children become young adults, I feel an urgency for storytelling to be sure that, even when they don't remember their experiences with me, they will remember the stories.

And so, when I feel guilty about not remembering experiences with my mother clearly, I remind myself that her consistent love, care and self-sacrifice left an imprint on my soul. Those times that I manage to be kind, patient, loving—those are reflections of the times I spent with my mother.

* * *

Rednecks

By Greg King

You just don't talk about frivolous and trivial things in a redneck family. And of course, by "frivolous and trivial," I mean anything not related to huntin', fishin' or the things necessary to facilitate the huntin' and fishin'.

There are many lengthy conversations—sometimes even arguments—about trucks to haul the catch, the best route to take to the huntin' and fishin' place, the latest recipe for beer-can chicken to be made at the cabin, a new rub for your fried turkey, maybe the outrageous cost of gasoline to fuel the truck to go to the huntin' and fishin' place.

But never politics (except the 2nd Amendment), the arts (unless you count taxidermy as art), fashion (except safety orange versus archery camouflage) or philosophy (except when it's brief and will be safely forgotten in the morning as the hangover wears off).

* * *

Gray

By Blaise Liffick

I don't remember standing in front of the draft board to plead my case, but I certainly must have.

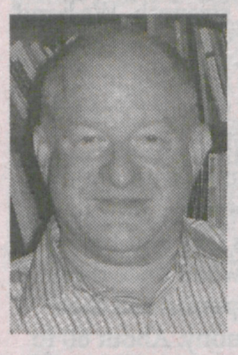
I imagine it as a long, narrow room brightly lit with fluorescent overhead lights, giving the room an industrial glow, and a long gray industrial folding table with three men, older than middle age, literally sitting in judgment, me standing before them answering their stupid questions.

The floor tile was dirty gray and faintly crunched when you walked on it. The walls were gray, the paint peeling in spots. There were gray metal chairs arranged neatly in rows in front of the table. For inductees, probably.

Gray, everything gray—the floor, the walls, the chairs, the table, the men. Gunmetal gray.

I could just be remembering a scene from some movie, though, a false memory that I've integrated into my psyche. I'll never know the truth of it, though, since any witnesses are long dead or forgotten.

* * *



Every Hell is Different

By Ted Martin

Every Hell is different, but the background music remains the same. And there it sits, forever on that repeating loop that sometimes just plays on and on in my brain.

Raindrops keep fallin' on my head
And just like the guy whose feet are too big for his bed...
Nothin' seems to fit...
Those raindrops are fallin' on my head, they keep fallin'...

This wasn't my sandbox or a good game of war in the woods. It sure as hell wasn't any place for a 7-year-old, but there I stood in the middle of my living room surrounded by Satan's handmaidens (or my grandmother's bridge club ... second Thursday every other month) singing that awful song again. …

Every note of that miserable song was plucked out with malice. Each metallic plink and plunk drove me closer to the harshest torture of that hell—the grand finale where I had to dance with my sister, kissing her politely on the cheek at the end.

* * *

Elisa Miotto

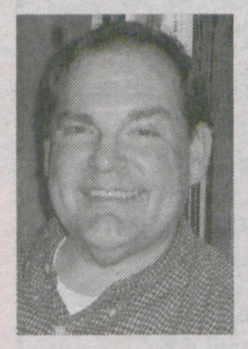
By Andrea Miotto

Nonna's house was the place of refuge for our family, away from constant fighting. Nonna was one of the very few people my dad feared and respected; those two things went together in his mind. He put a watch on his tongue and his hands at his mother's house in West Palm Beach, Fla. Nonna liked my mother, and Mom seemed to expand and relax in Nonna's presence.

Nonna's sunny affection came without conditions. Her approval was constant and without fuss. When we told her about long, convoluted dreams at the breakfast table she smiled and wanted to hear more.

During our summer visits we showed her every picture and paper we'd brought home during the school year and they were always "Pretty!" or "Good!" We used to argue over who would get to sit next to her at Mass. She always rubbed that child's hand or hair with a slow, brown hand.

* * *



Saying Goodbye

By David Zwifka

Mom hadn't done her own hair in years because the horrible arthritis that crippled her no longer allowed her to do so. Instead, every few weeks, I took her to a salon to get her hair done, but she always complained that they couldn't do much with it. There was so little of it, and treatments like perms and coloring only made things worse.

The good thing was that she still went, and she still wanted the full treatment. It was one of the small ordinary things she still enjoyed—a trip to the salon.

After she went into the nursing home, we didn't go out to get her hair done very often. She discovered that she could have her hair done every week at the home, so that became a priority and a highlight of her week. It was a luxury she never allowed herself while she was working and raising a family.

Log Cabin Republicans Name R. Clarke Cooper Executive Director

R. Clarke Cooper, a former diplomat and veteran, has been named the executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR) by its national board of directors.

Cooper is an eight-year veteran of the George W. Bush Administration, most recently serving as Counselor and Chief of Staff at the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN) and as an Alternative Representative to the U.N. Security Council from 2007 to 2009.

Prior to his service in New York, he served as the Senior Legislative Advisor for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of Iraq Affairs from 2006-2007, and as the Legislative Affairs Advisor for the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad from 2005-2006.

Cooper initially came to Iraq as an

continued on page 13

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Central to your life.

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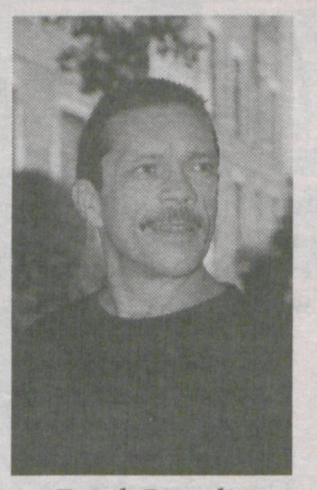
publisher's note



Frank Pizzoli

We Are a Resilient People

No matter what, we are a resilient people.

What's always impressed me about our community is our strength. We bend when necessary. Bending in the face of force takes strength. We hold firm when needed.

If the landscape is minus an important resource, we make one. We now have the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce when once there was none. They recently performed their first ribbon cutting ceremony. About 60 to 80 people attend their monthly networking nights.

Programming by the LGBT Community Center Coalition is growing roots. FAB takes place Oct. 16 at Hershey Lodge. Last year the event drew more people (537) than Philadelphia's HRC annual dinner.

Our Capital Region Stonewall Democrats remain the hot ticket when it comes to political endorsements at election time. Candidates lined up at Harrisburg Midtown Arts Center to court their attention at the height of the campaign season.

TransCentral PA is a growing educational force in the region. They draw hundreds to the regions hotels and restaurants with an annual educational event.

When a formerly local Air Force member, Jene Newsome, got tied up in a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" knot, she spoke loudly and clearly about the injustice of her situation.

When Phillip Nelson had enough violence in his life, he took charge. (See story this issue.)

In recent years, the Lancaster lgbt community decided to host their own Pride event. It's now three years old and growing.

Finally, Central PA Pride Festival, with its 5,000-plus annual attendees, continues to bring fun, food, and one heck of a great Parade to the region. Together, all of us, all of our strengths, resources, our endless creativity bring dollars into the region.

We are a resilient people.

voice box

Sticker Shock

"It's about time somebody did something! Public space is shared space paid for with tax dollars, private contributions. It's not your 1st Amendment right to deface public property even if you are the world's badest new local rock band anymore than it's your right to deface private property."

The reader is referring to Lancaster Mayor Rick Gray's proposed new city ordinance ordinance that would, as reported by Lancaster New Era writer Bernard Harris, call on people or organizations connected with the stickers, posters, advertisements or signs to remove them or be fined. "It's graffiti. It's not done with a pen or a spray can, but it's still graffiti," Gray said.

Lancaster Reader

* * *

From thecentralvoice.ning.com re Family Research Council & Rentboy.com post:

Good post. Hope to read more excellent posts in the future.

Rockewell Sonicrafter

George Rekers should just hang the towel. His story is too incredible to be believed. He was caught with his pants down.

Just Curious

I feel very sorry for Prof. Rekers as he appears to be having a harder time with his "baggage" that with his luggage!

Bob Schulenbe

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com

Why Gay Is Good for Straight People

From momlogic.com

Diana Landen: If America would just allow gay people to get married, it would be better for all of us. Let me explain.

"Each one of us, whether we ever marry or not, benefits from the ways a healthy marriage culture protects children and the common good." -- National Organization for Marriage (NOM) pamphlet

I don't know whether to scream or cry. Our society desperately needs more strong, healthy marriages that last a lifetime. The members of NOM could be fighting to create them. Instead, NOM just wants to keep gay people from marrying each other.

Have they thought this one through? Who, exactly, are the gay men and lesbians supposed to marry? Some of my best friends are gay men, but I wouldn't want my daughter to marry one.

My friend Debra dated a gay man in college. He told her she kissed wrong. Debra was beautiful, but Tim managed to make her feel unattractive. Debra was lucky, though: It was the 1980s, and Tim eventually came out, moved to Amsterdam and married a man.

Not everyone is so lucky. My friend Alec married a lesbian. She would push him away when he tried to hug her.

A generation earlier, Alec might have spent his life in a doomed marriage. Instead, Alec's wife was able to accept herself and come out to him before they had any children. Alec went on to find happiness with a straight wife who enjoyed his lust.

Marriages between gay and straight people are not healthy marriages. They are based on a lie. Gay-straight marriages lack the passionate love that marriage thrives on, and they have no way to create it. The truth leaves the straight partner feeling betrayed, hurt, embarrassed and angry. The straight person's sense of self can be shattered -- especially their feelings about their sexuality.

Meanwhile, the gay spouse struggles with feelings of guilt and self-hatred. Frequently, they are unable to be faithful. So we have former pastor Ted Haggard accused of visiting a prostitute and paying hush money over an affair with a church member. We have former Congressman Eric Massa accused of sexually harassing

continued on page 5

Consumers Could Save $457 Annually on Energy Bills

Submitted by PennFuture
By Jan Jarrett

A new report finds that Pennsylvania families will continue to spend an extra $457 per year on their energy bills if strong energy efficiency policies are not incorporated into the climate and energy legislation before Congress, according to PennFuture report.

The report claims that robust state and federal energy efficiency policies could dramatically reduce energy consumption and save Pennsylvanians $457 on their energy bills every year. These policies would drive down energy costs for families in every state while jump-starting a clean energy economy across the country to put Americans back to work, the report says.

The report demonstrates the immense benefits to Pennsylvania families of including strong energy efficiency policies as part of the climate and energy package and job-creation measures currently being debated by the U.S. Senate. The report, "Building on the Success of Energy Efficiency Programs to Ensure an Affordable Energy Future," is the first to look strictly at the effects of energy efficiency on home energy use and home utility bills since climate legislation began moving in Congress earlier this year.

Based on an analysis of state programs and recent national studies, the report concludes that energy efficiency programs can dramatically cut energy waste and that strong federal energy efficiency policies could reduce overall energy use by 20 to 30%.

"Our research shows we've only begun to tap the energy efficiency potential that can create jobs, conserve energy, and save families hundreds of dollars each year," said report author Dr. Mark Cooper, Research Director for the Consumer Federation of America. "Given its stellar record of success, it's time for senators to view energy efficiency as a cornerstone of the nation's climate and energy policy."

The report outlines specific policies that would maximize the cost-saving potential of efficiency and create new jobs. These policies include a federal energy efficiency resource standard (EERS) that would require utility companies to encourage efficiency programs for customers; strengthened building codes and appliance efficiency improvements; and proper funding for retrofitting or improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings. Other efficiency proposals – including BuildingSTAR, a program that would provide tax credits for retrofitting commercial and apartment buildings – would help businesses cut costs and allow clean energy businesses to expand, putting more Americans into long-term quality jobs.

Today's report shows that a robust energy savings plan on a national level could mean an average of $271.31 in savings for the average Pennsylvania family, even if families have to invest their own money into energy efficient products. But the Keystone State's families are likely to save much more.

"In Pennsylvania, we're already on track in saving energy, money, and the environment," said Jan Jarrett, president and CEO of PennFuture. "Thanks to the Energy Savings legislation passed last year, we are already taking action. Across the state, our utilities are offering comprehensive energy savings programs and rebates to make our homes and businesses waste less energy.

"We know it works," continued Jarrett. "It pays off for our families, with lower bills; for our economy, with green jobs created right here to help make our homes more energy efficient; and for our environment, with reduced pollution from our power plants. Our U.S. senators and representatives should pass a strong federal energy efficiency standard so Pennsylvanians can get an even bigger bang for our bucks."

"Encouraging more energy efficiency among Pennsylvania homeowners and businesses would mean more jobs in an already vibrant and expanding clean energy sector," said Ron Ruman, of Pennsylvania Business Leaders for a Clean Energy Economy. "Companies such as Serious Materials, which continues to hire workers to make energy efficient windows at its Vandergrift plant, and Appalachian Lighting, which manufactures energy efficient LED lighting fixtures in its Elwood City plant, are just examples of how this policy would mean more jobs for Pennsylvanians."

Small Games of Chance Could Help Charities

Pennsylvania[1]'s local, independently owned and operated taverns - and local nonprofits in their communities - would win big under proposal to allow the games in taverns.

The plan has been introduced by Pennsylvania Tavern Association (PTA) who are committed to fighting for a level playing field for their small, locally owned establishments.

Under the "Local Option Small Games of Chance Act," allowing taverns to offer patrons small games of chance would raise an estimated $100 million in new revenue for the state, while helping local charities through the still-difficult economic times and leveling the playing field for family-owned taverns across Pennsylvania.

"From the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, which was a gathering place for the Continental Congress and the birthplace of the U.S. Marine Corps, to scores of family-owned and operated taverns in communities across Pennsylvania, our establishments are places where Pennsylvanians can gather to celebrate, mourn, conduct business, and enjoy time with their friends and family members," says Amy Christie, executive director of the Pennsylvania Tavern Association. "This proposal is a win for our members and for local charities that would see a dramatic boost in their contributions."

Small games of chance could be allowed with by expanding Act 156 to permit licensed establishments such as taverns to offer small games of chance; increase the individual prize limits for

continued on page 6

Why Gay Is Good cont'd

his male employees. Former Senator Larry Craig had apparently been ready to have sex with a stranger in a bathroom.

Not surprisingly, gay-straight marriages rarely last. The Straight Spouse Network estimates that only 17 percent of mixed-orientation marriages will still be together three years after the gay or lesbian spouse comes out. That's an 83 percent divorce rate -- twice as high as the already-high national rate of 40 percent.

And what about the children in all of this? Before he was caught hiring a male prostitute to carry his luggage, minister and anti-gay activist George Rekers testified against adoption by gay parents in several court cases. Children, he argued, need parents who present positive role models of relationships between men and women.

Apparently Rekers thinks it is better for kids to have a father who visits prostitutes than two fathers who love each other.

Or maybe Rekers thinks divorce is good for children. Ironically, the former president of NOM, Maggie Gallagher, has written about the benefits of marriage for children. She argues that children with married parents are richer, healthier, better behaved, more educated, more successful and more likely to have lasting marriages themselves.

The truth is simple: Gay-straight marriages lead to adultery and divorce. They are dishonest, unhappy, unhealthy and bad for children. Gay marriages are the solution, not the problem.

It's long past time to accept and celebrate gay people and support them marrying each other. And maybe if people stopped fighting gay marriage, we could get to work figuring out how to strengthen American marriage.

letters to the editor

Great Issue
Just a note of thanks for a great issue (May-June). I love how our ad was placed and the article looks great. Thank you for all your support of MCC and your work in the community. It is making a difference.

Rev. Charles Tigard
Metropolitan Community Church

Love It!
Just wanted to thank you for the article. We got copies today and we loved it!

Carl and Chris
Pencilworks Gallery
Lancaster

Great
Saw the article on us in the Central Voice. It's great!

Gavin Paul
Food Not Bombs

Coverage
On behalf of the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, I want to thank Central Voice for its great coverage of our events and for its support of our mission.

Russell A. Boggs, President/CEO
Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

No Consolidation Supervisors Say

The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, representing the commonwealth's 1,455 townships of the second class and more than 10,000 local officials, strongly opposes House Bill 2431. The bill would radically change the way Pennsylvanians are governed by making the county the central seat of local government.

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Thomas Caltagirone, Berks County, calls for a constitutional amendment to establish Pennsylvania's 67 counties as the basic level of government. Under the plan, which would eliminate townships, cities, and boroughs, the counties would oversee all municipal operations, including roads, land use and zoning, sanitation, health and safety, and law enforcement.

"For years, people have been saying that Pennsylvania has too many local governments. So-called reformers refer to townships as 'fiefdoms' and 'relics of the past,' and they complain about duplicated services and the rising cost of government," PSATS Executive Director David M. Sanko said. "But you know what? No one has ever proven that bigger government is better – or even more cost-effective – government.

"In fact the opposite is true. Just look around this state, and you'll see the evidence. Townships aren't failing, declaring bankruptcy, or imposing widespread tax increases. Instead, it's the bigger governments – places like Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Reading – that are in real financial trouble. Townships have been doing more with less – and doing it successfully – ever since the days of William Penn, and they are still around for a very good reason: They work."

PSATS President John Haiko disagrees with critics who say that local leaders oppose legislation like House Bill 2431 because they want to preserve their power and their jobs.

"This isn't about self-preservation at all," Haiko said. "It's about holding onto a good thing: townships. There, you'll find committed elected leaders and employees who would much rather put off buying a piece of equipment than raise taxes. These people, who live and work in the communities they represent, are more committed to pinching pennies, increasing their efficiency, and working together to stretch tax dollars than anyone else in government today."

In a 2005 report, titled Growth, Economic Development, and Local Government Structure in Pennsylvania, consolidation expert Wendell Cox concluded that lawmakers should back off on efforts to consolidate Pennsylvania's 2,562 local governments. He praised the state's municipal leaders for their frugality, their accountability to their constituents, and their willingness to work with other local governments.

your voice

In fact, a recent PSATS survey revealed that 82 percent of township respondents are involved in projects with neighboring municipalities. These efforts are saving tax dollars and enhancing government efficiency.

"I don't dispute that government is broken – in Harrisburg and Washington. And that's where we really should be focusing our attention," Sanko said. "It's important to remember, too, that Pennsylvania has so many local governments because that's what the people want. In this debate –so focused on quantity – many are forgetting that quality does exist in government, and it's in Pennsylvania's townships."

transgender column

Are Gender Non-Conforming People Mentally Ill?

By Jeanine Ruhsam
TransCentralPA

A few weeks ago I stood before the board of directors of the LGBT Community Center Coalition and explained to them why the issue of gender non-conformity is not a mental disorder or disease.

The staff and directors had rightly signed on to a petition circulated by Centerlink, a networking site for the nation's lgbt community centers, which called on the American Psychiatric Association to eliminate all diagnoses addressing gender identity and non-conformity from the DSM-5. The manual, currently and regularly revised, is published by the APA and provides a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders. Unfortunately, a few board members expressed non-support of that move, so the center's president - an ardent supporter of TransCentralPA- asked me to try to educate the board on the issue so they would all stand behind this effort to de-pathologize gender non-conformity.

Why, ask so many, does this one book have the power to pronounce the many people that do not conform completely to the social structure of the existing gender binary "mentally ill"? Remember, readers, that in earlier versions of the DSM, gay and lesbian people also were afforded that classification as "disordered," which certainly made that large percentage of our population second-class (or worse "mentally ill") citizens.

Through popular effort that stigma was removed in succeeding revisions in the 1980's, and now the time is at hand to remove Gender Identity Disorder and its associated classifications from the upcoming version.

Interestingly, and quite importantly, my talk led full circle to the current debate on ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act, soon to be voted on in Congress) which would prohibit discrimination against employees on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. As many of you know, the debacle of the 2007 ENDA legislation (the bill ultimately died) stemmed from it being stripped of its transgender-inclusive language in an abortive effort to get it passed. Of all the nation's lgbt organizations, only the Human Rights Campaign backed a gender-identity-inclusive version of the bill and suffers derision for that move to this day.

There are opponents of ENDA and they are loud and they are nasty. Opponents have targeted the transgender component of the bill in their effort to derail its passage, and their weapon is the DSM-4. Their argument is simple: gender non-conforming people are mentally ill as proved by the DSM definition that GID is an illness and therefore should not be given the same rights as "normal" people. They might do harm to others. Opponents love to trot out the bathroom and locker-room scenarios, wherein lurking men-in-dresses given access to such facilities by ENDA's passage, will prey on helpless girls and women.

I concluded my talk by stressing the point that what draws lgbt people together as a collective group is that we all challenge gender conformity. As such we need to fully support each other in our effort to achieve full equality for all people here in the US.

TransCentralPA (Transgender Education Association of Central PA) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit charitable organization serving the community since 1989. The organization is dedicated to promoting acceptance of transgender people through education and visibility.

Small Games cont'd

small games of chance from $500 to $1,000; and increase the weekly limits from $5,000 to $20,000.

Under the proposal, establishments that offer small games to their patrons will contribute a percentage of their weekly gross revenue to a charitable organization designated in their license applications and an additional percentage of their weekly gross revenue to the state. A new weekly assessment will only apply to newly licensed establishments and would not impact clubs or volunteer charitable organizations already licensed to conduct small games of chance.

Tom Berry, PTA board president and tavern owner in Delaware County, said this plan will help level the playing field for small business owners like him.

"Our establishments today are forced to compete on an unfair playing field," said Berry. "Casinos play by their own set of rules that put our taverns at a competitive disadvantage. Small clubs are able to offer their patrons small games of chance that generate extraordinary revenues for them. And, both casinos and clubs aren't forced to comply with all of the rules and regulations that are forced upon taverns.That's why this proposal is so important to our members."

York events

Intergalactic Bead & Jewelry Show
July 17, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
York Expo Center - Horticultural Hall
334 Carlisle Ave, York, PA, 17404
Reward yourself with a bead buying trip to the Intergalactic Show. Find unique beads.

"Fast from the Past: The Racing Motorcycles of Yesteryear"
Runs until 5/1/2010
Antique Auto Museum at Hershey
161 Museum Dr., Hershey
9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
www.aacamuseum.org
(717) 566-7100

Lancaster events

Schreiber Pediatric Rehab Center Rubber Duckie Race & Festival
July 25, 2-6 p.m.
Lancaster County Central Park
3 Natures Way, Lancaster, PA, 17602
(717) 299-8215
Enjoy games and food and cheer on the floating ducks in this fundraiser event.

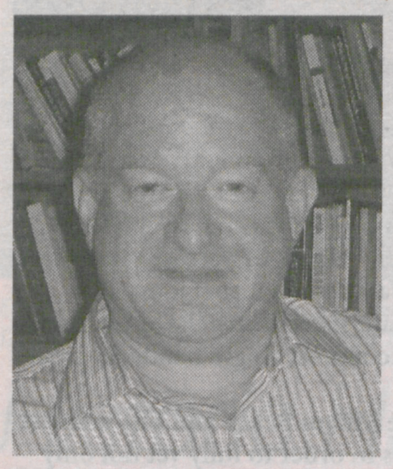
Smoketown Aviation Fair
Aug. 21, 7:30-10 a.m.
Missions Fest Lancaster Hosts Aviation Fair
600 C Eden Road, Lancaster, PA, 17601
(717) 509-0938

EqualityPA Names Ted Martin Head

By Frank Pizzoli

Following a national search, EqualityPA named local leader Ted Martin executive director.

Martin comes to the position with nearly 10 years with the US House of Representatives, a short stint running Historic Harrisburg Association, and from his most recent job with the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development as head of Economic Development Marketing.



Ted Martin, new executive director, EqualityPA

He's also involved with the south central Pennsylvania community where he lead a business association, served on the boards youth group Common Roads. Martin currently serves as board president of The LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA.

"I know that in the coming months this job is going to involve equal amounts of listening and talking," Martin says. "I intend to get out into the state to hear what the members of the community want and expect of EqualityPA, and I am hopeful that this will only be the beginning of an ongoing conversation. That, in and of itself, is a huge task," he explained, "but this conversation will be central to our long term goal of making the Commonwealth's lgbt community a real force in politics and policymaking."

Martin will be based in EqualityPA's Harrisburg office, with office hours in their Philadelphia location. The organization is currently in discussions to open an additional office in the state.

In an effort to make the organization truly representative of the entire state, the organization recently added new board members. Including Martin, four of them are from the south central region: Chris Gatesman, Lauren Barr, and Syngred Briddell. "It has been said all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing. I want to do something. I want to be part of the solution," says Gatesman.

Martin and new board members recently hosted a meet-and-greet at The Mantis Gallery, Midtown Harrisburg, which drew nearly 40 people to hear about the organization's new direction.

The full board compliment includes: Brian Sims, president, Phila.; Mark Usry, vice-president, Bloomsburg; Saida Agostini, Phila.; Joyce Avila, Tobyhanna; Barr, Martin, now executive director, and Briddell, Harrisburg; Jeff Brauer and Paul Nardone, Scranton; Gatesman, and David Price, Pittsburgh.

Board president Brian Sims says "education, advocacy, and the lobbying work that is so vital in Pennsylvania" remains their focus. The organization has played an active role in every piece of lgbt legislation passing through the Pennsylvania House or Senate," says Sims.

The organization has involved itself with a statewide non-discrimination policy, statewide hate crimes legislation, strengthening anti-bullying legislation, and relationship recognition.

Local Harrisburg board member Lauren Barr says "As a straight person it is sometimes all too easy to take certain rights for granted; rights that are denied to a segment of the population because of their sexual orientation, or their gender identity or expression."

New EqualityPA board members from the region Lauren Barr, Chris Gatesman, and Syngred Briddell.

"I accepted a seat on the board because I believe that our society is inherently unequal until the equality on which we pride ourselves extends to absolutely everyone," she says. Barr feels that as the seat of state government it is important for central Pennsylvania to have a presence on the board.

Local Harrisburg board member Syngred Briddell became involved because he has been "very alarmed by the political climate surrounding lgbt rights in our state, as well as nationwide." She volunteered with the ACLU on House Bill 300. "I began to feel a sense of indignation and urgency to do more to help protect these individuals."

As a Black American woman, who is a descendant of interracial families, Briddell feels a kindred spirit with the struggles experienced within the lgbt community. Being cognizant of the role various systems – judicial, political, educational - have played in marginalizing specific groups in this country "is imperative when you're attempting to effect change for this community," she notes.

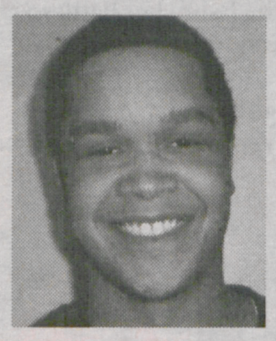
Briddell thinks impeding the rights of any minority group within this nation "leaves all others susceptible to attacks at the whims of the entitled. Being apathetic towards discrimination faced by the lgbt community is dangerous. Choosing not to recognize these actions as violations of their civil rights is unacceptable. This is what I believe."

Gatesman says "Although the Stonewall Riots were certainly not the beginning of our journey toward lgbt equality, it was a profound point in our history. I was in my first year of high school when all that was happening and believed I had nothing in common with the gay activists of 1969. Much has changed since the summer of '69 for our community and for me. I don't take for granted all that I have as a gay person today," he says.

Gatesman says he realizes change has comes from "a generation of men and women who stepped in front of their personal insecurities and fears and worked to make a difference."

Contact: Web site under construction; also facebook.com/equalitypa, twitter.com/equalitypa, equalitypa.blogspot.com, Mason Lane, Eastern PA Field Organizer, mlane@equalitypa.org.

Mental Health Top Concern



By Steven Palmer

A health survey conducted with 1,200 male and female respondents by K-Y Brand® Liquid at the Millennium March on Washington revealed that and mental health are among the most serious health concerns for gay men and lesbians.

Depression and mental health topped a list of health concerns that included, among other things, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, aging and eating disorders. In fact, the issue of depression and mental health was the number one concern for lesbians and the number one concern for gay men after HIV/AIDS.

"Depression and mental health are serious issues for the gay and lesbian community," said Dr. Stephen Goldstone, a physician who operates a predominantly gay practice in New York City. "This survey helps shed light on a problem that has long existed, but has received little attention."

Almost 75 percent of the respondents to the survey believe that depression is more common among gay men and lesbians than in the general population.

A significant finding from the survey was the common use of "party drugs" among gay male respondents. Nearly 40 percent of gay men surveyed at the Millennium March said that "party drugs," such as cocaine, special K, crystal, ecstasy and GHB, are used at least once a month or more among their close circle of friends. On a positive note, an almost equal number, more than 38 percent, said that "party drugs" are never used among their close circle of friends.

Also significant was the finding that lesbians ranked alcohol abuse as their second highest health concern for the community after depression and mental health. More than 30 percent of gay men reported the same concern.

"What we are seeing is that mental and behavioral health are among the most pressing concerns for gay men and lesbians," said Goldstone. "Medical professionals need to recognize that these issues should be an integral part of any patient evaluation and they should treat patients accordingly. Gay and lesbian health is more than just sexual practices."

Other findings of the survey include:

· More than 70 percent of lesbians and more than 60 percent of gay men have sought or are actively considering mental health counseling.

· When asked where lgbt health organizations should focus their attention in the year 2000 and beyond, respondents identified depression as their #1 choice after HIV/AIDS.

· Seventy-five percent of those surveyed believe that drug, alcohol and tobacco addiction are greater in the gay community than in the general public.

· Almost 90 percent of gay men believe that "party drugs" are a threat to the health of the community.

· Almost 40 percent of gay men surveyed said that a partner has pressured them to have unprotected or unsafe sex.

· Nearly one in four respondents reported having been struck or hit by a boyfriend or girlfriend. (In many instances, gay and lesbian victims of domestic violence receive fewer protections than heterosexuals under various state laws and have fewer support services available to them, according to the American Bar Association. The fear of being "outed," or perceived law enforcement bias, may also limit reporting.)

· More than 83 percent of gay men and lesbians surveyed feel it is important or very important to have a gay or gay-friendly physician.

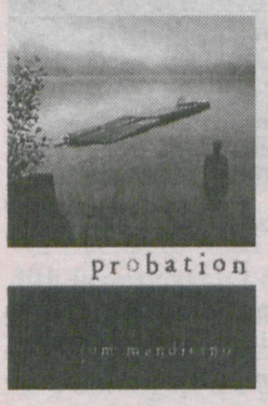
The vast majority of gay men and lesbians who completed the survey were out to family and close friends 97.6 percent and 86.3 percent, respectively.

Contact: Steven Palmer @ steven@aca-pa.com; 717-233-7190. M4M is a component of AIDS Community Alliance.

book review

Summer Reading Suggestions

By Lewis Maurer
Dauphin County Library System
Why not try an LGBT Book Club selection or a new title from the Dauphin County Library System for your gay summer reading pleasure?



Probation
By Tom Mendicino
A middle-aged married man whose indiscretion in a men's bathroom forces him to re-evaluate his chosen life becomes a surprisingly sympathetic narrator in this potent debut. When Andy Nocera is arrested at a public highway rest stop, his wife leaves him, prompted by her father, for whom Andy works. Resigned to putting his life back together, he moves home with his mother, recently diagnosed with cancer, and takes a job as a traveling salesman around which he schedules his court-ordered therapy with a stubborn Jesuit priest. Andy attempts to detangle his motivations for both getting married when his emotions lay elsewhere and settling for an existence as a dutiful son. Like a contemporary Ethan Frome, Mendicino's protagonist struggles to reconcile his desires with the expectations of the people around him, and despite the occasional melodramatic moment, sure-footed plotting keeps the narrative from lapsing into a confessional slump. (Apr.) Copyright 2010 Reed Business Information.

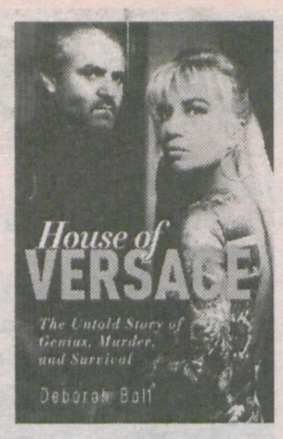
Whipping Girl: a transsexual woman on sexism and the scapegoating of femininity
By Julia Serano
With her first full-length book, biologist, writer and musician Serano positions herself as a Betty Friedan of the transsexual community. Making a case that trans discrimination is steeped in sexism and that trans activism is a feminist movement, Serano delivers a series of articulate, compelling and provocative essays that unmask many of the misconceptions surrounding transsexualism, gender and feminism. Where most books on the topic focus either on first-person accounts or clinical observations, Serano approaches her topic from multiple angles. Tempering her own experience as a transsexual woman with psychological documentation, historical research and sociological data, she explores the debate on biology versus socialization; the media's "lurid," "superficial" and "contrived" depictions of trans women; the psychology of transitioning; "boygasms" versus "girlgasms"; nonacceptance and marginalization of transsexual women by the feminist community; and the subtle shades of gray between masculinity and femininity. Though her writing is dense at times, Serano largely succeeds in breaking down complex issues and offering deep insights that will be valued by anyone interested in transsexualism or gender studies. (June) Copyright 2007 Reed Business Information.

Robin and Ruby
By K. N. Soehnlein
Soehnlein's third novel reintroduces Robin MacKenzie, the gay teen protagonist from The World of Normal Boys. Robin is now 20, in the mid-1980s, and on the night that his older, scholarly lover breaks up with him, he shares an intense sexual experience with George, his black, longtime best friend. When a phone message from his sister, Ruby, on summer break after her first year at college, disturbs him, and he learns that she's disappeared from a party, Robin takes off with George to look for her. Ruby, meanwhile, has been having a hard time with her boyfriend, Calvin, and her housemates at the Jersey shore who are either drunk or high and teasing her about her virginity. Reconnecting with a troubled boy from her past, Ruby leaves to search for him and sets out on her own adventure of discovery. While the bother and sister encounter danger, passion, and sex, Ruby's story is the more engaging, capturing intimately the mood of the period. (Apr.) Copyright 2010 Reed Business Information.

The Family Man
By Elinor Lipman
A divorced gay man's vanquished paternalism returns when he reconnects with his long-lost stepdaughter in Lipman's hilarious and moving 10th novel. Set in New York, the book opens with Henry Archer phoning his ex-wife, Denise, to offer condolences over the death of her husband, the man Denise divorced then-closeted Henry for. Upon visiting Denise, Henry notices photos of now grown stepdaughter Thalia, a charming wannabe actress he recognizes from the hair salon in his neighborhood, and determines to reenter her life. What ensues is a heartwarming reconnection as Henry and Thalia relearn what it means to be a father and daughter, respectively. When Thalia is hired by a PR firm to play the role of real-life girlfriend to a struggling actor, Henry's fatherly instinct and legal background compel him to ask Thalia to move in with him and to serve as her attorney. During the process of managing Thalia's career, Henry also grows closer to Denise, meets a handsome man and rediscovers the joy of family. The plot alone will suck in readers, but Lipman's knack for creating lovable and multifaceted characters is the real draw. (May) Copyright 2009 Reed Business Information.

Book Review:

House of Versace: The Untold Story of Genius, Murder, and Survival"



By Frank Pizzoli

Ever wonder about the real story the day the words "They've shot Gianni" rang out?

Did Andrew Cunanan shoot Versace because he believed Versace infected him with the HIV virus?

What were the backstory relationships among Versace siblings?

Read how legendary celebs like vogue editor Anna Wintour, Elton John, Naomi Campbell, Princess Diana, Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy plus a huge cast of intimates criss-crossed the incredible life of the man known as "Johnny" to his friends and associates.

The first book in English about the legendary designer, "House of Versace: The Untold Story of Genius, Murder, and Survival" by Milan Wall Street Journal journalist Deborah Ball shows how Gianni Versace, with his flamboyant sister Donatella at his side, combined his virtuosic talent and extraordinary ambition to almost single-handedly create the celebrity culture we take for granted today.

"The crime record itself is about a 1,000 pages, all the Miami Beach and FBI information," Ball tells Central Voice. She completed 220 interviews in order to fully vet not only the crime itself but the dizzying labyrinth of family, business, and social networks buzzing around what was called the Versace Empire.

"Johnny's brother Santos sat for six interviews. Donatella sat for 2 long interviews. Her daughter, to whom Versace left his 50% interest in the dynasty, refused an interview," Balls reveals. Allegra has only given one interview, to Harper's Bizarre, since her famous uncle's death.

Versace's companion Antonio D'Amico sat with Ball for four interviews.

Versace's name conjures up images of outrageous glamour and bold sexuality. Yet Versace is also the legacy of a great creative genius from a poor, backward part of southern Italy. "They were a typical Italian family in that everyone helped out. Johnny had the recognized creative talent but each sibling played a significant role," Ball says. Many say his intuitive understanding of women changed the way wanted to dress.

The first book in English about the legendary designer, "HOUSE OF VERSACE: The Untold Story of Genius, Murder, and Survival" by Milan Wall Street Journal journalist Deborah Ball shows how Gianni Versace, with his flamboyant sister Donatella at his side, combined his virtuosic talent and extraordinary ambition to almost single-handedly create the celebrity culture we take for granted today.

Gianni Versace was at the height of his creative powers when he was murdered in Miami Beach. The story was front page news around the world and the manhunt for his killer a media obsession.

"The crime record itself is about a 1,000 pages, all the Miami Beach and FBI information," Ball tells Central Voice. She completed 220 interviews in order to fully and completely vet not only the crime itself but the dizzying labyrinth of family, business, and social networks buzzing around what was called the Versace Empire.

"You can't make a mistake. With a project like this all facts must be nailed down. The Versace family is, understandably, very concerned about

Ball vividly recounts the behind-the scenes struggles – both creative and business – of Donatella as she stepped out of her brother's long shadow and took control of the House of Versace. The book offers the first inside look at the enormous challenges Donatella faced in living up to Gianni's genius, her struggle with a decades-long drug habit, her battles with her brother Santo, and the mystery of why Gianni left control of his house to Donatella's young daughter, Allegra.

Although copiously researched, her book is a compelling, highly readable tale of a rise from obscurity, a painful fall, and ultimate redemption as the Versace empire returned to health – for now.

HOUSE OF VERSACE
By Deborah Ball
Crown * February 2, 2010 * 352 pages
$26.00 * 978-0-307-40651-4
www.CrownPublishing.com

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L to R: Historic Harrisburg Association executive director John Campbell, business manager Chris Deitz, and the first executive director David Morrison.

The Paper Lion Gallery owners Bill Grace and Jim Hadfield installed the art exhibit for the event.

Historic Harrisburg Association Draws 300+ to Facility

"We couldn't be happier with our turnout!" beamed John Campbell, executive director, Historic Harrisburg Association. The organization drew more than 300 visitors to its buffed up property at as part of a 3rd in the Burg night in Midtown Harrisburg.

"Recently we had 20 students from Bloomsburg University here to seriously clean the space," said Chris Deitz, business manager. Some returned that night to see their work firsthand.

With constant chatter throughout the evening of new talent at the helm, visitors spoke enthusiastically of bringing back the valuable resource. "We're more than meets the eye," explained Campbell. HHA is the parent organization to the Broad Street Market. As the capital city's 3rd Street corridor continues to evolve into a destination point, HHA is poised to play ball.

Well after 9 p.m. the night of the street event, the corners at 3rd and Verbeke Sts. Remained abuzz with visitors from surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Mantis Gallery, also home to Moviate, held court well into the evening with a lively crowd.

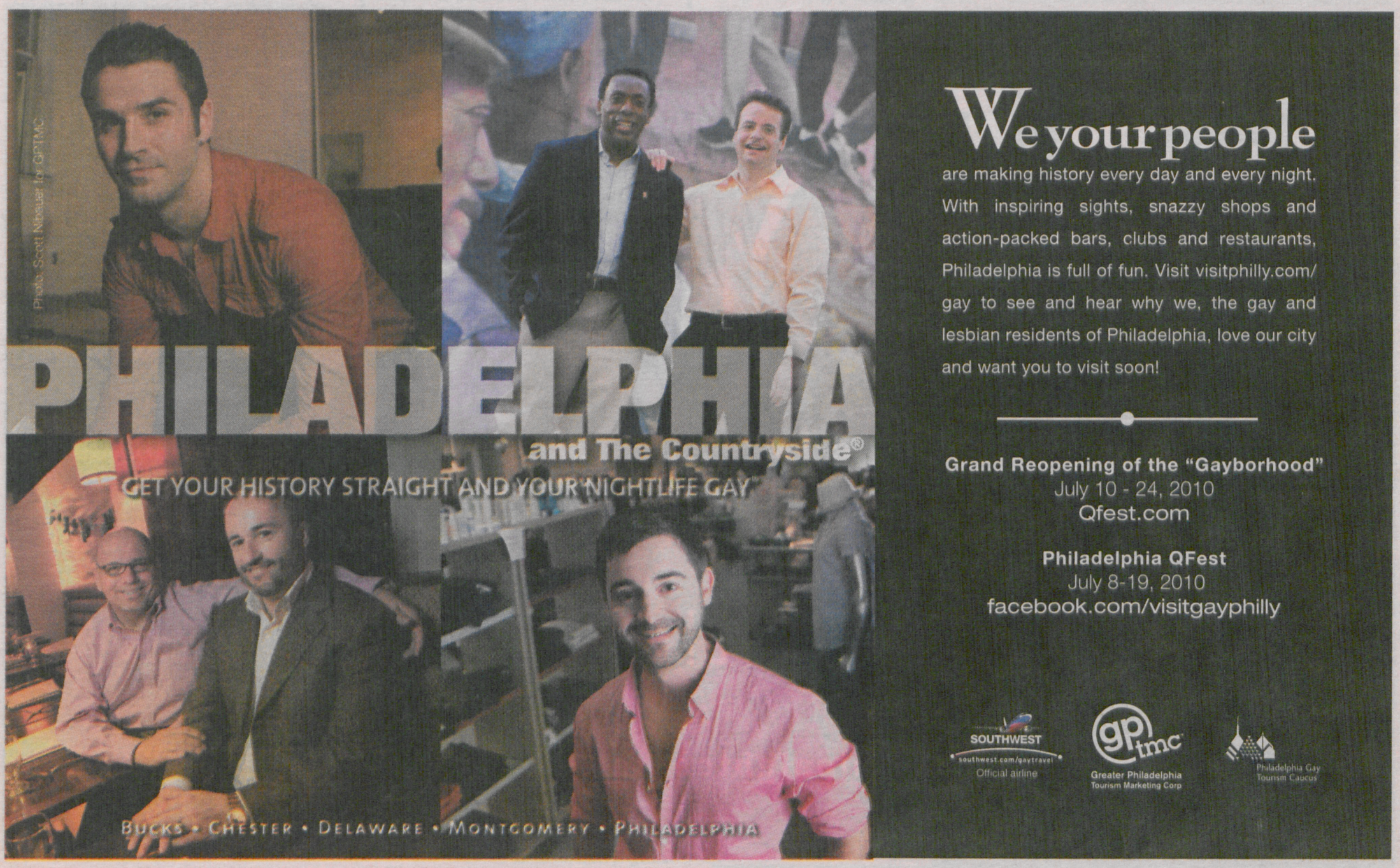
Campbell and Deitz see their first step as bringing people back into the HHA orbit. The organization's first executive director, David Morrison, well known in historical preservation and art circles who continuously support the mission, greeted newcomers and old faces. "This is great, this feels like renewal," he commented.

Campbell talked of a Capital Campaign. "We've had the facility reviewed by developers and others. We need $1.5 million to bring it back," he said. He and Deitz envision a multipurpose property, rentals to smaller organizations, meeting space. "Recently we hosted Preservation PA for their annual conference," Campbell said.

Bill Grace and Jim Hadfield, owners of The Paper Lion Gallery, 12317 Hummel Ave., Lemoyne, installed the art exhibit for the event.

One visitor said with a wide smile "I know I'm living in the right place when I see this."

Info: Historic Harrisburg Association, 1230 North Third St., Harrisburg, PA 17102, (717) 233-4646, Mon.-Fri., 9-5, www.historicharrisburg.org; info@historicharrisburg.org



Issue Analysis:
PA ACLU Legislative Director Andy Hoover Talks

By Frank Pizzoli

If legislation or regulations in Pennsylvania have to do with lgbt issues, you'll see the ubiquitous face of Andy Hoover combing the hallways of power.

Hoover is legislative director for the ACLU of Pennsylvania, working on civil rights issues in the state capitol and collaborating with the Washington legislative office on federal issues.

In Pennsylvania, Hoover coordinates lgbt activity through the Value All Families Coalition, an umbrella coalition representing paid lobbyists, volunteers, local groups with no state-level staff, and state-level efforts with no local staff. "We're a clearinghouse for lgbt lobbying issues," he says.

Founded in 1920 and with a current half million national membership and 16,000 in the state, the praised and hated organization consistently pursues the civil liberties point of view. "We end up being an air traffic controller for civil liberties issues. We have a presence at the capitol that a lot of our allies do not have, so we watch the legislation come and go and engage our allies, as needed," Hoover says. They've even defended the free speech rights of Neo-Nazi groups.

Close to home the ACLU in June 2004 received numerous phone calls from angry parents after Dover Area School District passed a curriculum change requiring high school biology students be read a statement saying that the theory of evolution is not fact and mentioning intelligent design as an alternative theory.

Never give up communicating

Believing the school was promoting a religious idea in the classroom and violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, several Dover parents called the ACLU to discuss possible legal action. The ACLU, with Americans United for Separation of Church and State and Pepper Hamilton, LLP, represented the plaintiff parents.

After a 40-day trial draw international scrutiny, Judge John E. Jones III ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. He ruled that intelligent design is not science and permanently forbid the Dover school system from teaching intelligent design in science classes.

Lobbying is a completely different political animal than pursuing court cases.

When it comes to lobbying, Hoover advises interest groups to "know why your elected official is for or against something." He laments the fact that so many stakeholder groups know what they want without taking the time to understand why an elected official may support or reject their positions. "Over time, anyone can change anyone's mind," Hoover says, adding "never give up communicating with those important to your effort."

"I also ask people to unpack issues," Hoover says. He means that lgbt issues involve many aspects and elected officials may not oppose all positions. For example, citizen lobbyists may encounter opposition to gay adoption but not hospital visitation rights. "Find the common ground," Hoover advises.

If elected officials represent constituents, be sure to inform them about voters' outlooks.

"There's a statewide poll out there that indicates more than 70% of the state supports banning discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression," Hoover notes. The Susquehanna

continued on next page >

Pennsylvanians Support Legislation Banning Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression

*PA Statewide Poll, November 7-12, 2007, 750 Likely Voters. Margin of Error +/-3.58%

Research & Polling results represent all portions of the state. (See map).

In addition to gay issues, Hoover has supported a measure banning execution of individuals judges determine are intellectually challenged. He's opposed requiring a forced HIV test of someone accused of a sexual assault.

Defended free speech rights of Neo-Nazi groups

Hoover's opposed a bill ending parole for and increase sentencing for persons convicted of second or third violent offenses while on parole for a previous violent offense. The Commission on Sentencing says the bill, at its peak, would cost $50 million per year. With the PA Dept. of Corrections budget projected to be more than $2 billion annually, there is talk of decreasing prison populations, even while two new facilities are under discussion.

Along with the Disability Rights Network, Juvenile Law Center, and Education Law Center, Hoover's opposed mandating school administrators to call police when certain offenses occur. His organization supports a bill requiring public schools to teach comprehensive sex education and a second bill that calls for public schools teaching abstinence-only-until-marriage sex to send a notice home informing parents.

Hoover has worked on at least 25 bills in the 2009-2010 legislative session. Readers can expect to see him out there pulling the levers of lgbt and other civil rights efforts.

About Andy Hoover

Andy Hoover has worked for the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania for more than five years, joining in 2004 as a community organizer. He became legislative director in 2008.

As the organization's lead lobbyist, Hoover largely deals with civil liberties and civil rights issues at the state capitol. He also works in conjunction with the ACLU's Washington Legislative Office on federal issues.

Hoover's work at the ACLU of PA has included efforts to reform conditions at Dauphin County Prison; to stop the implementation of the federal Real ID Act in Pennsylvania; and to block efforts to rewrite the state constitution to ban same sex marriage. He represents his organization on the steering committee of the Pennsylvania Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Youth and as a co-convener of the Value All Families Coalition, a statewide coalition that advocates on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

He also serves on the boards of directors of Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty and The Interfaith Alliance of Pennsylvania.

Legislative Action in ACLU of Pennsylvania

Compiled from 2009 Annual Report

The American Civil Liberties Union is headquartered in New York City and coordinates with independent affiliate offices in 47 states and the District of Columbia. The national office maintains chapters in North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Puerto Rico. Most of the direct legal, legislative and public education work is handled by the affiliates.

The mission is to defend the basic rights guaranteed to all by the federal constitution, especially the Bill of Rights. The organization focuses on many different areas, including lobbying, litigating and advocating on behalf of LGBT and HIV/AIDS issues.

Accountability - National staff members consult with affiliates in setting priorities and developing strategies, managing cases and campaigns, and taking the lead on important national lawsuits. The state affiliates are linked to the national by electing the governing board of the national ACLU and sharing financial support with headquarters.

PA Activity

Marriage

Succeeded in tabling bill providing for constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages and other legal recognition; organized phone banks, regional educational events, rallies, and legislative meetings

Schools & Youth

With youth and LGBT groups, formed Youth Advocacy and Rights Project to empower and support Philadelphia-area GSAs

Represented Franklin High School ninth grader harassed by classmates because of his perceived sexual orientation; district agreed to pay monetary damages and conduct anti-harassment training for staff and students

Lobbied unsuccessfully for bill giving protections to LGBT youth in foster care

Successfully advocated for two students in Oil City School District sent home for refusing to remove t-shirts about Day of Silence

Discrimination

Led field and lobbying efforts in support of measure to amend Pennsylvania's non-discrimination law to include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression (pending)

continued on page 14

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AIDS Walk

Not even a cloudy day dampened walkers' enthusiasm in the recent AIDS Walk by AIDS Community Alliance. Even the pets enjoyed themselves.

The Time to Die

By Albert Paschall

On a quick guess, of the myriad of programs, initiatives, regulations and laws in Pennsylvania's $28 billion budget which is the most ineffective, rarely used and total waste of money? The answer is a real killer. The most rarely used of all is the death penalty.

On the state's death row there are 220 prisoners in isolation, most of them guilty of a single murder. The crime that the great detective Holmes called a 'crime of wit.' That means rarely planned, committed on emotion and taking none of the calculations necessary to successfully rob a bank or burglarize a home. Investigators report that murder is largely committed on the spur of the moment. Yet the momentous act of taking a life relates to the state's ultimate penalty: death. In this state by lethal injection.

Lethal injection is considered 'humane' execution. The injection of a toxic cocktail that gradually chokes the heart. Historically it follows a long list of humane forms of execution. From the Roman days of crucifixion, to beheading in the 6th century, hanging - the longest humane form of state ordered death - from the 7th century to the 20th, then followed in the last century by the humane scorching of the electric chair and then the gas chamber.

But is the death penalty a deterrent to crime? Doesn't appear to be, especially since the state has only carried it out 3 times since it was reinstated by the Supreme Court in 1976. Meanwhile a typical prisoner in the Commonwealth's penal system costs about $20,000 a year to house, the isolation of death row costs about $13,000 more per prisoner. That translates into roughly $7.2 million into something the state and its courts have no commitment to.

For a couple of good reasons. Since the death penalty was reinstated, across the nation 139 people have been exonerated of their crimes, including 6 in Pennsylvania. The death penalty is expensive. In neighboring Maryland from 1976 through 2008 the Urban Institute estimates that death penalty cases cost that state some $186 million about $37 million for each of the state's 5 executions. These costs include lawyers, appeals, research, expert witnesses and, of course, incarceration.

New Mexico's aggressive death sentence Governor Bill Richardson signed life without parole legislation ending that state's ultimate power last year as did former Governor Corzine of New Jersey.

Senator Daylin Leach has introduced legislation to end the death penalty in Pennsylvania. Governor Rendell, a former prosecutor, has said even if it is passed he will veto it. Rendell faces a $450 million shortfall in this year's budget. Gaining $7.2 million in that scheme probably doesn't mean much. But if he would change his mind someday he could erase the potential for the state to make horrific mistakes. It's time for the death penalty to die. Six lives saved from erroneous execution, is six mistakes too many.

Albert Paschall is Senior Fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Public Opinion Research, a non-profit educational foundation with offices in Harrisburg and King Of Prussia.

Log Cabin Republicans cont'd

Army reserve officer on active duty, for which he was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Iraq Campaign Medal with two stars and the Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

"Log Cabin is fortunate to have Clarke's skills and experience to lead the organization at this critical time," said Log Cabin Republicans national board chairman Terry Hamilton.

"His 16 years of public policy and political experience have prepared him to lead Log Cabin and ensure our role as a key player in strengthening an inclusive Republican Party. As Congress is debating the failed 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy, we could not have a better advocate in ensuring that this policy gets overturned."

Cooper first entered the Bush Administration in 2001 as the Assistant Director of the National Park Service for Legislative and Congressional Affairs. Prior to the Bush Administration, Cooper served as Deputy Director of the Florida-Washington Office from 1999-2001 for Governor Jeb Bush.

"During my administration, Clarke was part of an excellent team that built improved relations with the federal government that benefited the citizens of Florida," said former Governor Bush, now Chairman of the Foundation for Florida's Future. "He proved himself to be hardworking and results driven and a genuine public servant."

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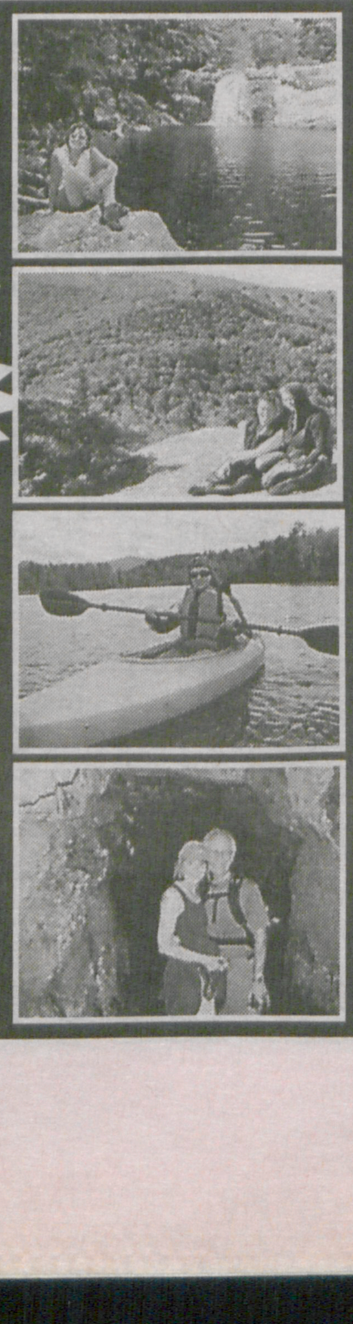

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Study Supports Early Child Care

Submitted by Pennsylvania Child Care Association

High-quality child care can have a lasting impact on a child's development, behavior and cognitive abilities, according to a report released this week by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Based on the findings of the report, children who received high-quality care in the first few years of life scored higher on measures of academic and cognitive achievement when they were 15 years old. They also were less likely to misbehave than those who were enrolled in lower-quality child care, according to the report.

"The report clearly shows that high-quality child care is related to future academic success," said Linda K. Smith, Executive Director of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). "And, yet, nationally most children do not have access to quality care. We've had 40 years of child care research, all with a consistent message – quality child care makes a difference. The NICHD study shows that even 10 years after children have left child care, quality child care is still related to higher academic achievement. But, the condition of child care throughout the country is poor. Standards are weak; oversight is weaker.

"Pennsylvania has come a long way in improving the condition of child care in our state, and we must maintain that commitment and focus – quality is important. And Pennsylvania can do better," said Terry Casey, President of the Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA). "What is important about the NICHD report is that it shows the quality of care can have a long-lasting impact on middle class and affluent children, not poor children alone," Casey continued.

This message is timely for both federal and state policy makers. "I hope this report is a wake-up call to Congress. The primary reason that state child care policies are so weak is that the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the law that gives guidance to states in setting state child care policy, needs to be strengthened. Nationally, more than 11 million children under age 5 are in some type of child care setting every week while their parents work. In Pennsylvania, statistics show that the total number of children under age 6 needing child care as parents work is 528,233. On average, children of working parents spend 36 hours or more every week in child care.

"Now is the time for Congress to act to improve the quality of child care," said Diana Dixon, Chair of the PACCA Board of Directors. "It has been 20 years since CCDBG was first enacted. Policymakers have really not taken a close look at it since then," said Dixon. "We know the quality of care matters. We know that children need to be safe and in a setting that promotes their healthy development and early learning. How many more studies do we need before Congress strengthens our nation's child care laws?"

PACCA urges members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to take note of the NICHD study as they deliberate the state budget. The study validates that early childhood education investments have powerful immediate and long-term impacts. Casey notes, "This study reinforces the need to make investing in high quality early education and care for Pennsylvania's children an integral part of the Commonwealth's FY 2010-2011 General Fund Budget."

Contact: Pennsylvania Child Care Association, (717) 657-9000 ext. 114

Legislative Action cont'd

Filed friend-of-the-court brief in federal appeals court challenging dismissal of employment discrimination case marked by coworkers' relentless harassment of employee of private business with antigay religious messages and taunts about his effeminate appearance; brief argues that harassment by coworkers based on their religious views about gay people is illegal religious discrimination (pending)

Filed friend-of-the-court brief in case brought by a Boy Scout chapter in Philadelphia, supporting city's decision to revoke the Boy Scout's "free-rent" privileges (pending)

Full annual report available at http://www.aclu.org/hiv-aids_lgbt-rights/annual-update-2009

Melissa Etheridge cont'd

After all you've been through this past decade, what place are you in now?

That was an intense decade! But everything that happened makes me stronger, makes me understand that this is what life is. You are presented with these issues, but you learn and you grow and you move on. Life is rich and full, and nothing's going to kill you. You just keep moving forward – and it gets sweeter.

So this is an extension of "The Awakening"?

This is the next step. I had to do _ The Awakening_ to present and be upfront about the things that were happening inside of me, the spiritual side of me. The awakening part of me is understanding and going through cancer and saying, "Whoa! Life is a lot different. Life is not what it seems."

That album was important to put out so people – myself and my fans – would know what path I was on, and then after it seemed so clear that it was time to gather up all that strength. I was knocked down and it was time to pull the parts of me together that I knew were there in this confidence and in this clarity that I have now and shoot it through that rock 'n' roll gift that I've been given.

"Life is not what it seems" – that's a line from the closing track, "Gently We Row." How has that been true in your own life?

I wanted to reference the children's song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," because that song has all the truth in it that we need. I love that we're taught it as a child. "… Life is but a dream" – that's all it is. We create it every day. That's what came to me. That's where I got to going through cancer and coming out.

Life doesn't happen to us. We are creating this, and we have more power than it seems. This can happen to you, but your perception of what it is creates what it is. You have a choice in how your life affects you. That's mostly what I want to convey through my music.

Did it take you a long time to realize that?

I got the crash course in it with chemotherapy because I laid there day after day, week after week, and had nothing. No television. No books. I couldn't even read; it hurt to read.

It was just day after day with myself, until my mind – our minds are so busy setting things up in the future and worrying about the past – ran out of things to think about. And it just stopped. When that happens there's this beautiful spirit that's behind that that really is in charge of what's happening,

Also on "Gently We Row," I noticed the parallels between your mother raising you and you raising your daughter. I thought that was so powerful.

That's another part of getting older. You realize your parents did shape a lot of what you think and do and feel, yet it's time to stop blaming them. You can stay there and you can wallow around in that or you can say, "OK, this happened to me and now I make different choices." And that's what the song's about. I'm making different choices for myself and for my children. When you do that, you also heal yourself.

Parenthood actually pops up several times on this album. How has it changed you?

Oh, it's unbelievable. I just had no idea of what being a mother would do. And it's all-encompassing, it's every breath I take, it's every moment I live. I am a mother to four children, and I don't go to sleep at night until I know where all four are and how they are. It makes me a better person, it makes me more loving, compassionate, patient – patience is ... definitely required (laughs), or you'll just get eaten up alive. They teach me every day about myself. They are these beautiful little mirrors, and I want to be the best person I can be for them.

Speaking of the kids, there was an episode of Kathy Griffin's "My Life on the D-List" that aired last year where she was in your house, seeking tips on becoming an activist. What was that like?

Kathy Griffin's awesome. She's on a journey of her own, coming from the place of being on the D-list, and then she turned herself A-list. You see it's not a place you get to; it's about how you feel inside about yourself. Her activism, her caring and her journey are very inspiring. And she's super talented, too.

Did you eat those cookies you were baking while she was there?

Yes, we did! And we made some more a little later.

Do the kids like to bake a lot?

Anything involving sugar, there they are with a spoon.

What was it like reteaming with producer John Shanks, who worked on 1999's "Breakdown"?

He was my guitar player in my first band. We hung out in the '80s, and we've played every hellhole bar. And we've also played Madison Square Garden. We've been through so much, and he knows what I'm capable of. He knows just how to get the best out of it and how to push me to give my best. He's like my brother that makes me crazy (laughs). It was really wonderful working with him.

How did the collaboration with Natasha Bedingfield and Joss Stone on "We Are the Ones" come about?

That's my favorite track on the album just because it's different and crazy and I love it. John called me up and said, "Hey, guess who was across the hall recording – Joss Stone!" She just sang on it. Then, like a week later, he said, "Hey, Natasha Bedingfield's coming in and I'm going to play her this song. I think she's going to sing on it." So he worked with her. That's what he can do, because he's John Shanks.

Have you met Natasha?

No, I haven't! We've become very intimate on tape, though.

When did you know you had "Fearless Love"?

The way that I'm looking at it is that it's about my own fearless love. I need to love fearlessly, and that starts with myself. That's been the journey in the last five years.

You're touring this summer, but without your hot, longtime electric guitarist Philip Sayce – why?

Because Philip's got his own little career going on, so I just cleared the board. I went, "This is a new page for me. It's a new album, it's a new sound, and it's a new feel. I'm just breaking out." It's hard because I get very attached to my band, but they weren't available to make the album, so that was the first step of going, "Ya know, I think this is leading me down another path and I need to be open." I sent him off with love and I'm sure we'll get together in the future, but right now I'm putting these guys together and they're dedicated to working with me now.

The music video for "Nervous" – the second single – stars Edie Falco, which reminds me of all the other hot actresses who've appeared in your videos – Jennifer Aniston, Juliette Lewis and Gwyneth Paltrow. Of them all, who made you the most nervous?

Edie Falco, probably. Did you see the way she looked at me? (Laughs)

How did her cameo come about?

I actually know the creator of "Nurse Jackie". She's one of my BFFs, and her and I have been trying to do a television show together for a long time and when she landed "Nurse Jackie", I was so happy for her. I played the album for her months ago, and she goes, "Can I use 'Nervous' in the final episode of Season 2?" It was just a really sweet and fun thing to do.

Have you seen Crystal Bowersox on "American Idol" this season?

I have! And my kids love her. The first time they saw her, they paused it – because I only let them watch it on the weekend on TiVo – and came running into the kitchen. They said, "Mom, come here!" They had paused it on the shot of her guitar and they said, "Is that your signature?" And holy cow, that was my signature. Besides a couple of tracks, there are far less politics on "Fearless Love" than on "The Awakening." (Laughs) They're just hidden underneath.

"Miss California," a song about the state's ban on gay marriage, is blatantly political. How do you think music and political activism – or activism of any sort – work together?

Music reaches past people's minds and it goes straight into their spirit, their soul, their body. You can take advantage of that in a way. Music and activism is natural. It's always been a way through time to bring us closer to the unity we all need to be in.

Is "Indiana" about your wife Tammy Lynn Michaels?

It's completely about Tammy. She's from Indiana, and her journey has been so inspiring to me – and I'm around it so much – that this song popped out. To be able to sing with compassion about another person is new for me. For me not to be in the song, I'm working on that.

Why didn't you before? Was it easier for you not to?

Yeah, I guess so, because everything was so autobiographic. I still do that, but I want to expand as a writer.

Is "Miss California" taking a dig at Carrie Prejean?

It's not necessarily her. I certainly don't know her and I don't really have a comment to the sadness that – I'm not even going to comment. It fit perfectly because when I started to write it, I said I really just have to address this. I have to address my home state, my people and the feeling of, like, being spurned by a lover. I thought, OK, I'm going to write a song about that and I'll call it "Miss California," just like Carrie Prejean – even though I'm definitely not singing to her. It just worked into the whole thing.

This album seems to reach back to your roots. You're rocking out more like you did in the '90s and you have a weary woman in an isolated room in the "Fearless Love" video much like the one for "Come to My Window." Was that intentional?

Yeah, that's still a part of me. I'm maturing and I create it differently, but that girl is still me, and so when I get on stage and sing "I'm the Only One," "Come to My Window" and "Bring Me Some Water" – from over 20 years ago – that's still me.

I might not be going through those experiences in that moment, but they happened to me. So I'm able to reflect on it, remember it, understand it in my life now, still see where that's happening in my life and rock from that place and feel comfortable now.

coming out column

Queeries: What to Do about Uninvited Kids at a Gay Party?

By Steven Petrow

Q: I was completely shocked when two of our gay friends showed up for a dinner party with their twins in tow. I hadn't mentioned kids in the invitation and the table was set for eight - four adult couples. I did the best I could, but I don't think I hid my irritation very well, especially when the twins complained about the caper sauce I served on the fish. Suggestions for the future?

A: Here's the problem: You have too few kids in your life. If you had more of them around, you'd know better than to invite two parents to dinner without addressing the kid issue one way or another. It pays to be explicit in such an invitation, writing or saying something like: "It will be the eight of us on Saturday. I think you know the other couples." Or, "It's just the big people this time. No little ones."

Of course, in this case one of the parents could have asked beforehand, "Just checking: Is it okay to bring the twins?" Still, I imagine they felt horrible when they saw a table set for eight adults. Or I hope they did. And, I trust that the parents apologized profusely in the moment and in their thank-you note, as well.

Finally, about that caper sauce: Please don't blame the kids for not taking to that. I suggest keeping emergency provisions in your cupboard—like mac 'n cheese—for the next set of freeloading toddlers.

New lesbian on the job?

Q: I think the new copy editor at my newspaper is a lesbian and she sure knows I am (everybody does). She hasn't actually said anything, though, and doesn't show up for our company's lgbt events. Is it okay if I just ask? Since I'm gay too, I figured it's not so invasive—or is it? She's really cute, by the way!

A: Did it occur to you that she might not be rushing to come out to you because she can tell you think she's "cute"? Some people have a really bad reaction to flirtation at work. There are, of course, a million other possible explanations for her not being upfront about it—if indeed she is gay. Maybe she's the private type. Maybe she's had bad experiences in the past with coworkers knowing her business. Maybe she's not even sure she's a lesbian herself.

In any case, no, don't ask. Especially in a workplace situation, it's better to let things unfold organically. Not only is her sexuality technically none of your business and not related to your work, asking the question directly could end up alienating someone you may need to work with or otherwise benefit from as an ally—no matter whether she ends up being straight, gay, or bi.

Wasn't that a one-night stand?

Q: Here's the deal. We met at a bar, had a couple of drinks, went back to his place and had great sex. Period. End of story. Or so I thought. As I was leaving, he asked me for my number so that we could "get together again." I thought he understood this was a one-night stand. I just said, "I'll see you when I see you." Did I do anything wrong?

A: Not really, no. It just sounds like one or both of you could have been more explicit ahead of time. But it's a tricky situation. Unless you're having sex at a club or in a backroom, it's easy to misunderstand where the other guy is coming from.

Next time, try to set some limits. In the throes of passion, it may not feel quite right to say, "I only want to have sex with you and then got to go." But what about: "I need to be asleep in an hour because I've got an early flight tomorrow" or "My boyfriend will be home in a little while so let's get busy…" It's also important what you do after you climax: Avoid getting into a lot of post-coital chitchat. Don't be rude, just don't get drawn into a lengthy discussion.

Three things to remember: If it's a no-strings-attached hookup, don't expect to exchange last names, email addresses or phone numbers. If you're at a guy's house, make sure you remember to take everything that's yours because you may never see him again. Finally, and most importantly, be prepared and be safe. That means having condoms on hand and using your sixth sense to make sure the guy's not a psycho. Oh yes, also enjoy yourself.

Steven Petrow is a regular contributor to The Huffington Post and Yahoo! He's also the author of The Essential Book of Gay Manners & Etiquette. Ask him your own question at: queeries@live.com

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The Wedding Singer Opens at YLT

The Wedding Singer, Broadway's recent musical salute to the 1980s is opening at York Little Theatre on July 9. Based on the 1998 film of the same title, the 2006 musical was Tony-nominated for Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Original Score.

The show centers on New Jersey's favorite wedding singer, Robbie Hart, a would-be rock star who fronts a band that plays wedding receptions. He is in love with love and the notion of happily ever after until he is left standing at the altar by his fiancée. His only hope of salvation is with Julia, a sweet, clumsy waitress who already has a boyfriend. The light-hearted, romantic comedy storyline is driven by the high-energy, 1980s-style music.

The Wedding Singer is directed by YLT Artistic Director Eric Bradley Long and features local actors Adam Dienner, Cat Howard, Chris Ausherman, Tatiana Dalton, Lee Howard, Sean McComas and Dara Rees.

Performances are on July 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24 at 8 p.m.; and on July 11, 18 and 25 at 3 p.m. The Wedding Singer is part of the Columbia Gas Season. Tickets are $10 -20. More information and tickets are available by calling the box office at 717-854-5715, 11–6, Monday through Friday, or visiting www.ylt.org.

York Little Theatre is a nonprofit community theatre which values and nurtures the irreplaceable role of the arts and is dedicated to engaging and enriching its entire, diverse community in the dramatic arts through a broad range of professionally directed, entertaining, stimulating, and sometimes provocative performances.

York Little Theatre is located at 27 South Belmont Street, York PA, just south of Market Street at the intersection of I83. York Little Theatre is a proud member of The Cultural Alliance of York.

22nd Annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk on the Horizon!

The 22nd Annual Harrisburg Gallery Walk is slated for Sunday, September 12, 11 AM to 6 PM, with 31 sites included this year. As always, Gallery Walk is free, with a flyer and map available at all participating galleries and online at www.artassocofhbg.com. The Patriot News and WXPN are the sponsors of Harrisburg Gallery Walk this year.

Galleries for this year include, in order of appearance on the map: The Art Association of Harrisburg, The John Harris/Simon Cameron Mansion, St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral House Gallery, McKissick Associates, VQC Designs, Harrisburg Camera Club (at City Government Centre), and Penn National Insurance. Back this year is CASA in their new space in Strawberry Square, LaFemme Jolie, and the new Harrisburg History Centre on Market Street. Susquehanna Art Museum and their Art VanGo! are part of Gallery Walk again, as is The Middletown Area Arts Collective, located for the day at Salem United Church of Christ on Chestnut Street.

Also included are The Gallery at Walnut Place, ArtHouse Lounge,SPRAMA.design, Arts at 510, the new Gallery@Second,Pine Street Presbyterian Church, Mangia Qui & Suba, The State Museum of Pennsylvania, and the Harrisburg Midtown Arts Centre. Other Midtown sites are Hodgepodgery, Midtown Scholar Bookstore, The Mantis Collective,Nonna's Delisioso,Gallery Blu, and The Youth Advocate Program's Dauphin Family Clinic. The Governor's Residence will showcase works by The Seven Lively Artists.

The remaining two locations on the roster require driving: Reservoir Mansion is at 100 Concert Drive in Reservoir Park, and then continuing out Walnut Street/Rt. 22, one can visit Mitrani at Home at 3535 Walnut Street.

All Gallery Walk sites can be identified by the emerald green flags sporting a big yellow "G"! Visit www.artassocofhbg.com to view the brochure and pick one up at the Art Association when you begin your tour on September 12!

PFLAG Goes Straight for Equality

Liza Minnelli Accepts Award

By Winnie McCroy
Central Voice NYC Correspondent

Tensions rose in Times Square as the NYPD secured the area due to the May 1 car bomb attempt, but the mood remained festive inside the Marriot Marquis at PFLAG's Straight for Equality Awards Gala. The event honored straight allies in entertainment, sports, and business who have worked to secure equal rights for all—among them gay icon Liza Minnelli.

"I am just thrilled to be here, to be recognized and honored by PFLAG," said Minnelli. "I've been labeled a gay icon. I guess it's because I was different, the outcast, but I just stuck with it, and got where I am because I stuck with it. I think often gay people can identify with the outcast. And they survive, and they get through it all and they made it. Look how we made it! I know about surviving…believe me."

"My friends have supported me my whole life; I can't tell you what their friendship means," she continued. "I never thought my belief in equality and support for my gay friends would result in an award; it just seemed like the right thing to do…. And I'm not going to stop now.

So I give this challenge to you: let the things you've seen and heard tonight be a call to action. Tonight is just the beginning. Just think: What Would Liza Do? Discrimination is never acceptable. You are powerful, you are brave, and you can create an equality that means equality for everyone."

As the crowd erupted into applause, Minnelli launched into an impromptu song from her new album, Confessions. Also honored at the gala was Cleveland Browns linebacker Scott Fujita, and business ally Sodexo, a company that has made great strides in ensuring workplace equality.

"At Sodexo, the Straight for Equality training has been quite an eye-opener for the executive team," said Rohini Anand, Sodexo Senior Vice President and Global Chief Diversity Officer. "We came away with the commitment to drive systemic change from the top. We looked at all policies and practices to make sure they worked the same for same- and opposite-sex partners, our nondiscrimination policies include gender identity as well as sexual orientation, and then of course we have training, awareness, and affinity groups. All that collectively makes the difference."

Gala emcee Caroline Rhea welcomed the crowd who gathered to honor those friends and allies who are changing the lives of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. "I am not a direct member of the LGBTcommunity, but I have had a BLT," Rhea joked. "And this year I have the P part; I am parent, I have a little baby. So I get how you want the best for them. I get how much gay rights are civil rights, and how we all have refuse to buy any more wedding gifts for straight couples until there is marriage equality."

Playwright and award presenter Charles Busch with Straight for Equality in Entertainment winner Liza Minnelli.

Incoming PFLAG National President Rabbi David Horowitz spoke of PFLAG as the family voice of the LGBT community, and said that in that role, they must "reach out knowing that change will take place not only by the pressure of the LGBT community, but by those who will support them in Congress, at the ballot box, and with initiatives. But even more than that, we need slowly to change the minds and hearts of people. We can pass all the legislation we want, but they will always pass initiatives like Prop 8 to overturn it. So we need to get to the point where our allies are louder than our opponents."

Straight for Equality is PFLAG's outreach plan to empower straight people to support gay rights. "We continue to reach out because we're convinced change won't come quickly enough if we don't get a critical mass of straight people in this country to support these civil rights," said PFLAG National President John Cepek. "And of course we'll still be drying the tears of parents who are upset that they have a gay son; that part never goes away. But we can't succeed with parents alone; we need everybody in this country to get involved."

Gala auctioneer Reichen Lehmkul of

continued on page 29

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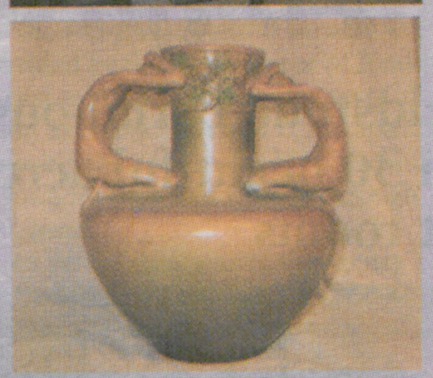

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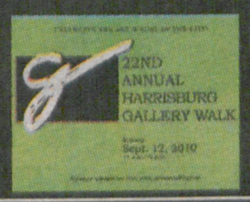

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PRiMA Theatre Group All Inclusive

By Frank Pizzoli

PRiMA Theatre Cofounders Mitchell and Diana Nugent

"Artists want to use their talents in ways that benefit the community," says PRiMA Theatre Co-founder Mitchell Nugent. The company grew out of a vision to serve the Lancaster community with modern, relevant, honest and hopeful theatre programming, he says.

Nugent and his wife Diana are leading forces behind PRiMA. Both are native New Yorkers who found a love for the Lancaster region.

"We bring together the region's professional theatre artists to collaborate and create," Nugent says. That includes lgbt people from whom the new group has already gained support. "We aim to be a loving community of artistic people with a special welcome for the oppressed and the misunderstood."

The group gives religious values a fresh interpretation. "We are centered on loving everyone and especially embracing groups like the lgbt community. Our dream is to be part of an emerging, fresh movement of people who feel it is not their job to judge but to love. Yes, PRiMA is centered on living out in our lives and our art the way of Jesus." The new organization does not think homosexuality is a sin.

"We're a financially intelligent operation. We're not about competing, not about money although we are wise about dollars," Nugent says. At first many people said our idea of cooperation wouldn't work. Meanwhile, observers have already noted that "they've never seen the creative community work together this way," Nugent says.

The theatre group has been producing cabaret nights at Prince Street Café. "We recently did 'The Defying Gravity Program' based on Stephen Schwartz's 'Wicked,' an updated version of 'The Wizard of Oz'" Nugent says.

Contact: www.primatheatre.com.

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AIDS Community Alliance Hosts LGBT Health Expert

"Whenever a segment of the community is not accepted stress often creates health disparities such as higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, tobacco use, and obesity," says Rebecca Fox, director, National Coalition on LGBT Health.

Fox headlined AIDS Community Alliance's LGBT Health Priorities Forum June 9 at the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg. ACA recently engaged numerous community organizations in discussions around the agency's new LGBT Community Health Initiative.

"Let me say clearly that our traditional core services to HIV/AIDS clients is intact, will remain intact, and will continue and expand as usual. We are adding lgbt health issues to our mission not subtracting services," explains Phil Goropoulos, ACA's President/CEO.

"We believe the organization has the skills, resources and partnerships necessary to improve health outcomes in eight areas that were highlighted by the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association in its companion document to Healthy People 2010: HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Immunizations & Infectious Diseases, Health Communication, Access to Quality Health Services, Mental Health & Mental Disorders, Substance Abuse, and Cancer.

Although the lgbt people are often excluded from the life of the community "We know that we are a strong community with support mechanisms," Fox says. The more an individual is "out" the better chance for a positive mental health and general health outlook, she notes.

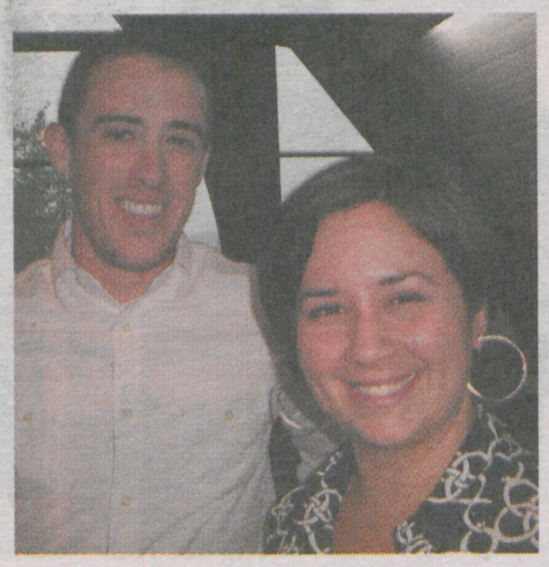
Fox says that the lgbt community still has work to do even with national healthcare reform underway. "We won't have data collection under reform," Fox says, meaning that health disparities won't be measured as a part of reform policy. "Many in the community are uninsured and/or underinsured and this needs to be addressed," Fox says.

Locally, ACA hopes to step in and partially address lgbt health issues.

In the first year of ACA's LGBT Community Health Initiative, programming will address the disparities in sexually transmitted infections, immunization and infectious diseases. "We will also begin a communication program around lgbt health issues which will, of course, include these disparities among other lgbt-related health issues.

Also during this first year, "We will begin investigation into the means and best practices of addressing lgbt access to quality health services," Goropoulos says. "Our meetings with community stakeholders stressed the importance of adding services to address mental health and mental disorders as quickly as possible to the Initiative's efforts. We will work toward this goal as speedily as possible," he says.

To date, ACA has secured a Preferred Provider Agreement from the Pennsylvania Department of Health Division of STDs to being screening for syphilis. Members of ACA's staff are to be trained during the next few weeks with the hope that the service should be in place by Central PA Pride Festival July 23–25. In addition, the Agency has begun the process of securing the staffing, training and appropriate contracts to add testing and treatment for Gonorrhea and Chlamydia . ACA hopes to incorporate the full array of STD screenings and treatment options into the Agency's community-based testing program that currently provides HIV Rapid Testing at locations throughout the region.



Senior Policy Associate Kellan Baker and Director Rebecca Fox, of the National Coalition for LGBT Health, addressed an audience of 32 people, some representing services and organizations, on lgbt health issues. The program was sponsored by AIDS Community Alliance. The next free program is Wed., Aug. 11, 7 p.m. at MCC of the Spirit, Harrisburg on "Lesbian Health Challenges". Info: 1-800-867-1550

ACA has been in communication with the division of the Department of Health responsible for immunizations. The department is interested in partnering with ACA for the provision of Hepatitis A and B vaccine and ACA is in the process of securing a medical director to oversee the program. "Once the director is in place, the application process may move forward. The Hepatitis A and B vaccine will be provided by the Department of Health at no cost to ACA," Goropoulos says. In addition to Hepatitis A and B, the agency is exploring the addition of HPV vaccinations for both men and women through the program.

As part of its research, the agency has visited the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective and is planning a visit to the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia. Regarding the addition of mental health services, the agency will be meeting with Pittsburgh's Persad Center to discuss mental health service delivery and models that have been effective as it has evolved over the years.

"We are planning to potentially do some surveying during Pride (both in Lancaster and Harrisburg). In addition, if you are a trained phlebotomist / nurse and would be willing to assist with blood draws for syphilis screenings at Harrisburg Pride please let ACA k now calling 717.233.7190.

Contact: Phil Goropoulos, President/CEO, AIDS Community Alliance, 100 North Cameron Street, Ste. 301-East, Harrisburg, PA 17101, 717.233.7190, fax: 717.233.7196

www.ACA-PA.com.

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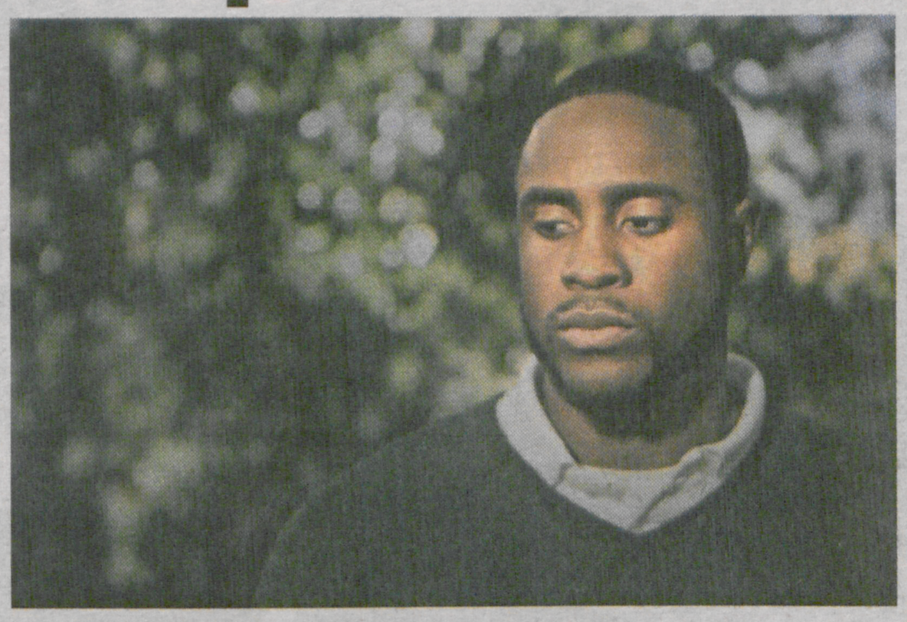

Depression can affect anyone.

Talk to your doctor if you think it may be affecting you.

Depression may lead to higher rates of HIV and STD infections. Take time to learn about your health. Take steps to reduce your risk. Use condoms. Talk to your partners about HIV and STDs. Get tested regularly.

Men4Men (M4M) is a program dedicated to the health and wellness of gay, bisexual and questioning men in South Central PA. M4M is a project of AIDS Community Alliance. For more information visit myspace.com/acam4m or call 1.800.867.1550.

Men4Men is funded in part by The AIDS Fund of South Central PA , FHCCP and Highmark.

Black and White Party Huge Success

The Black and White Party held at Club XS again hit new heights with fanfare and creativity created by dozens upon dozens of volunteers. The event raises funds to fight HIV in the region which benefit York's Family First and The AIDS Fund of South Central PA.

More photos available at thecentralvoice.ning.com.

Deb Gable

Mary Beth Ching,, benefit board member

York Family First representatives

York Mayor, the Honorable C. Kim Bracey

Far right, Tim Wood, benefit board member

On right, David Leas, AIDS Fund representative

John Folby and Charles Oswald

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Events Draw 80+

By Bill Krenz

Networking events by the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce continue to grow. In 2009, each event have about 60 members and non-members. In 2010, the chamber has averaged an attendance of 80 members and non-members.

Four Points by Sheraton and Pride Festival of Central PA hosted the May 11 mixer. The June 10 mixer at the private residence of David Forney was fabulous.

Don't miss the July 6 mixer sponsored by the historic Yorktowne Hotel in downtown York.

The August 12 mixer is sponsor by Posh Studios. This photography business is a must attend event and is located in Denver, PA in Lancaster County. Please RSVP and get additional details via the chamber's web site at www.cpglcc.org. The networking opportunities are great, and you'll definitely have a great time.

Remember that the chamber is a sponsor for both pride festivals. We had a stand at the June 19 Lancaster Pride event and will be at the Pride Festival of Central PA July 24.

The chamber board has been involved in various local business events.

The chamber, along with other LGBT groups such as Central Voice and the LGBT Community Center Coalition attended an April 22 meeting with Highmark Blue Shield management to discuss initiatives.

An educational seminar "Stop Discrimination Seminar" was held at Wells Fargo on May 5.

The chamber worked with The Hershey Company to acquire two baskets for the Black and White Silent Auction on May 7. The chamber was well represented at the Dauphin County Diversity event "A Framework for Understanding Differences" held at HACC.

There was a ribbon cutting event at Holtgate Podiatry in Lemoyne on May 20. The 3rd Annual "Celebrate Diversity" Networking Reception was held June 30 at the Hershey Lodge.

Remember that the chamber has the only comprehensive directory for lgbt owned and lgbt friendly businesses. Please go to the chamber's web site when you are researching a business, doctor, dentist, lawyer, florist, framing gallery or hair salon.

Remember that we need to keep our money within our community whenever possible. LGBT identified individuals have significant economic power in every community, and we need to constantly improve and be more supportive of our lgbt businesses. The chamber is the best source to determine where our community needs to spend its money.

Info: www.cpglcc.org

"There's a Song in My Art" Exhibit Theme in Harrisburg

Music-themed artwork takes center stage at the Art Association of Harrisburg, 21 N. Front St., Harrisburg PA the summer membership exhibit "There's a Song in My Art" runs through July 22.

The popular exhibition includes paintings, photographs, sculptures and mixed-media works of all styles, but all interpreting musical themes. Harrisburg Symphony Conductor Maestro Stuart Malina is prize juror for the unique exhibition.

The Best-of-Show Award for the exhibition is a gift certificate from CD Warehouse, donated by Jeff and Jane Wiles. There will also be media awards for oils and acrylics, watercolor, sculptures and ceramics, other media, and photography.

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Meloni are sponsors of the Summer Membership Exhibition. Reception hosts are Tracey Meloni and Nancy Bartholomaei-Olson.

The exhibition is open through July 22 with gallery hours of 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, and 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Info: 717-236-1432, www.artassocofhbg.com.

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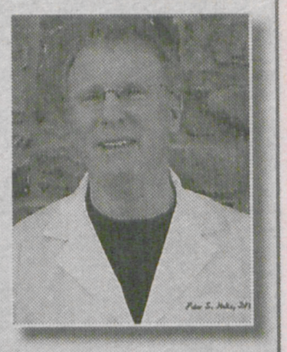

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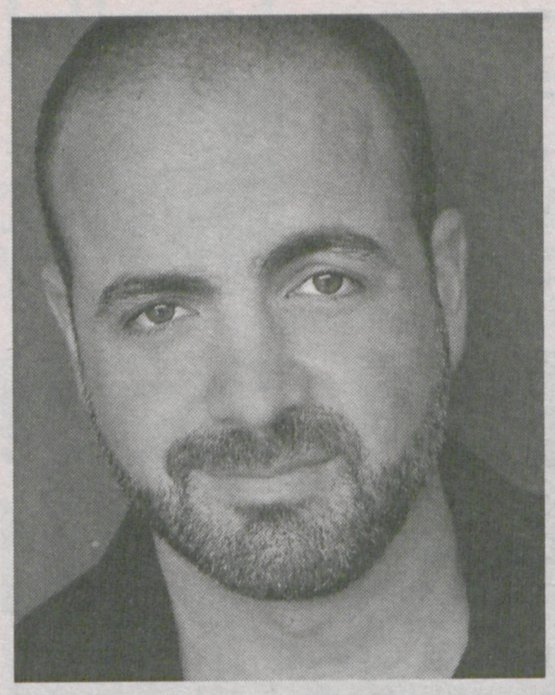
Gay Literature cont'd



Tony Valenzuela, executive director of Lambda Literary Foundation.

"Book commerce is shifting, largely to the Internet, and the new LambdaLiterary.org is a reflection of this new reality for readers, writers, publishers and our entire literary community," Valenzuela notes.

The change to a stronger cyber presence means more than book reviews now appearing online instead of where they used to appear - in a quarterly print journal, Lambda Book Report.

"In order for us to compete and thrive in the arena of lgbt literature, we have to be engaged on a daily basis with the literary public," Valenzuela says. New content is posted daily on the website, including reviews, author interviews, book news, literary blogs, video and more. "I say 'more' because this is Phase 1 of our website, our new public face. The foundation is seeing what's working for people and adding additional features over the next six months," Valenzuela says. The new website had 25,000 unique visitors and 60,000 page views its first month, eight or nine times more traffic than the previous website.

The ever popular Writers' Retreat for Emerging LGBT Voices, while not new, is back in 2010. "The economy has been in such a shambles that we postponed last year's retreat. But we're solid again. The retreat is August 8-15 in Los Angeles," Valenzuela says. Local writers share excerpts from their personal memoirs (page 3) in a class lead by local writer Michelle Simmons as a community center program.

"I think, slowly, you'll begin to see the foundation expand its programming and engage more directly with social justice issues. I am a deeply political person. I see the work of our queer writers, publishers, editors, librarians, in the context of a larger struggle for queer liberation and rights. Writing is social change," Valenzuela says.

"I'd like our relationship with independent bookstores to be helpful. We need each other. We feature about 50 independent lgbt and friendly bookstores on our website. I'd like to find ways to do more to promote and support their existence. Independent bookstores, whether lgbt or not, have always cared about our books and writers. They have historically been like community centers for like-minded folks to meet," Valenzuela says.

Valenzuela could easily be describing Harrisburg's Midtown Scholar Bookstore, 1302 North 3rd Street, home to several kinds of book clubs and numerous community events, panel discussions, political debates, plus coffee and goodies. The bookstore is the largest academic used bookstore between New York and Chicago with more than 1 million second-hand and out-of-print books in all scholarly fields. The establishment has been voted the region's "Best Independent Bookstore" for seven years as well being named one of "America's Great Independent Bookstores."

"We are housed in a fantastic, completely renovated 1920s theater, directly across from Harrisburg's historic Broad Street Market, says owner Eric Papenfuse. "Having the lgbt book club here, as well as several other book clubs, community groups and venues, is exactly the way I want this resource to operate. We're a community crossroads," he says.

The retailer is also home to book clubs on design, nonfiction, fiction, and urban education and social justice.

Harrisburg Book Club

Book clubs are a recent addition to the landscape thanks to the community center. Discussion groups meet regularly in Harrisburg and Mountville for the York and Lancaster areas.

"We have a consistent core of about six people, but have had attendance up to 18," says Harrisburg club leader Lewis Maurer. About nine months old, "our attendance grows each month with a mix of new and returning members," he says. The group meets the third Sunday of each month at Midtown Scholar Bookstore. Members suggest books to be read and they often lead discussions on their particular choices.

Maurer has had a long relationship with books. He's a Reference Department Manager who manages the staff and resources providing reference services for Dauphin County Library System's eight libraries.

"I lived in San Francisco from 1994 to 2001. I went to A Different Light, Does Your Mother Know. Really all the used bookstores in the Castro were gay bookstores," Maurer says. He reads mostly gay fiction. Maurer also writes a regular book review column for Central Voice.

"I rely on reviews in professional journals, book jobber selection lists, recommendations, publisher announcements, and Lambda Literary Foundation lists and their Lambda Book Report, a publication he's read in his role as a librarian.

Lewis Maurer

The Harrisburg email list for the club numbers 80-something. "It's a wonderful mix of men and women of all ages. One member remarked "I enjoyed reading this book twice as much because of the book club discussion."

York-Lancaster Book Club

An intern at the community center, Lori Covey, says the York-Lancaster location is a good midpoint on Rte. 30, speaking of the club's meeting spot at Trinity Reformed United Church of Christ, Mountville. Her group meets the third Sunday of each month, 5-7 p.m.

"We usually attract a few to 10 people," Covey says. Not gay herself but sympathetic to challenges faced by people, she first came to gay issues while doing academic research. She's in an MSW graduate program. "I learned a lot of nuance from my research and especially from leading the discussions," she reflects.

Covey thinks it must be often be confusing for gay people, their friends and families. "Media images are all over, Will & Grace, The L Word, Logo TV. Many straight people think everything must be alright," she says. "Everything's not alright. 'Out' is a relative term. It may mean someone is out away from work but not at work. It may mean someone is out with friends and work but not family," she clarifies.

"The book club gives me and participants a chance to make a difference and explore nuance," Covey says. The club "fosters a sense of wholeness within the region's community."

Fostering community is paramount for Papenfuse.

Lori Covey

"To survive one has to be a unique destination and cultural 'third space' within the community," Papenfuse says. Besides selling unique books at discounted prices, he provides community programming by hosting regular concerts in all musical genres.

"We organize monthly gallery exhibits, offer award-winning coffees, teas, and locally-sourced baked goods."

The "third space" for the region's lgbt readers is the coming together of the Midtown bookstore, the community center book clubs, Central Voice's regular book reviews, and titles across all genres, like the Lambda Literary Foundation.

"Most independent bookstores that are not religious in focus carry some lgbt titles.

Very few have as deep a selection of scholarly works in the field of gender studies as Midtown Scholar," Papenfuse says, adding "we emphasize lgbt titles and I think it would be wise for us to go out of our way to stock more of Lambda's featured authors."

"This is what the life of a community is all about. We come together – Central Voice through its book reviews, the community center book clubs, and, of course, readers," Papenfuse concludes.

Frank Pizzoli's interview of Edmund White and a review of his "Chaos" for Lambda Book Report are available from fpizzoli@aol.com.

LAMBDA LITERARY FOUNDATION
www.lambdaliterary.org

Midtown Scholar Bookstore
1302 North 3rd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Eric Papenfuse, Owner
ericpapenfuse@mindspring.com
www.MidtownScholar.com

- **Harrisburg Book Club meets 3rd Sunday of each month, 5-7 p.m., Midtown Scholar Bookstore. Lead by Lewis Maurer**
- **York/Lancaster Book Club meets 3rd Sunday of each month, 5-7 p.m., Trinity Reformed United Church of Christ, Mountville. Lead by Lori Covey**
- **LGBT Community Center Coalition, 717-920-9534; mailto:info@centralpalgbtcenter.org**

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LGBT community center coalition

New Services for LGBT Aging Explored

By Zack Ford

The LGBT Community Center Coalition recently introduced its newest program - the Central PA LGBT Aging Network (CPLAN). CPLAN's goal is to provide services, outreach, and advocacy for members of the lgbt community who are older and may feel disconnected from the community because of their age.

CPLAN's mission is to promote a positive and healthy quality of life for lgbt individuals in central Pennsylvania by ensuring they continue to be supported, respected, and connected as they advance in age.

CPLAN's first event was held June 6. The event was a simple Meet & Greet to reach out to the community and start building new connections. There was free food, a raffle, and informational resources. The social took place at the Posada Resort, formerly the Days Inn, just off the Turnpike on Eisenhower Blvd.

CPLAN hopes to become a recognized force in the region by providing social outlets to the community. The network also hopes to educate care providers and advocate on behalf of the unique challenges facing lgbt elders. The network will also explore connecting the community through intergenerational programming.

For more information about CPLAN or to get involved with CPLAN, please contact Zack Ford, CPLAN Coordinator, at zacharyford@gmail.com.

Hershey Theatre Welcomes Ballroom with a Twist

The highly anticipated production of Ballroom with a Twist dances its way into Hershey Theatre on July 17, 8 p.m. The show is a brilliant new dance production directed and choreographed by Dancing With the Stars own, Emmy nominated, Louis van Amstel.

Louis brings the same passion, expertise and excitement to the show as he exhibited on television with his celebrity partners: Kelly Osbourne, Priscilla Presley and Lisa Rinna, and as the choreographer of the live Dancing With the Stars tour.

This ground-breaking show pushes the boundaries of ballroom dance, infusing it with the energy and intensity of the hottest new dance styles. Ballroom with a Twist is an extravagant evening of entertainment for the entire family, highlighted by stunning costumes, magnificent music, and breathtaking performances. Fans can expect to see fellow Dancing With the Stars contestants Kristi Yamaguchi, Sabrina Bryan, Mark Ballis, and Jonathan Roberts. American Idol alumni David Hernandez and Trenyece Cobbins provide stylish and exciting vocal accompaniment and interludes.

Info: scottstander.com and click on Ballroom with a Twist. Tickets - $100, $65, $60, $50, $25 (processing fees apply) and are available at Hershey Theatre Box Office or charged by phone at 717-534-3405 or 1-800-745-3000, at all Ticketmaster locations, and online at Ticketmaster.com and HersheyTheatre.com.

Art Association of Harrisburg Offers Summer Classes

The Art Association of Harrisburg offers 23 classes for children and adults for the six-week Summer Semester beginning the week of July 11.

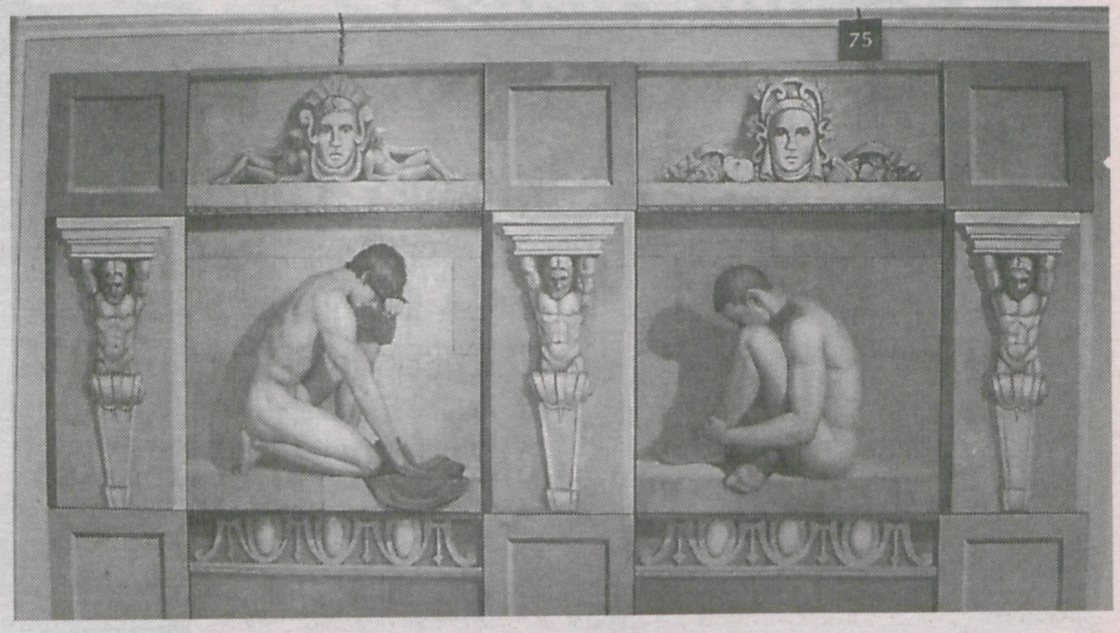
The art classes are conducted both at the 21 North Front Street location and in the four studios in Reservoir Park. The complete schedule of classes is available online at www.artassocofhbg.com, appearing in the Spring AAH Newsletter on the website.

The classes include pottery, wheel pottery, adult drawing, life drawing, basic oil, acrylics, watercolor, intermediate drawing and painting, painting, and experimental mixed media.

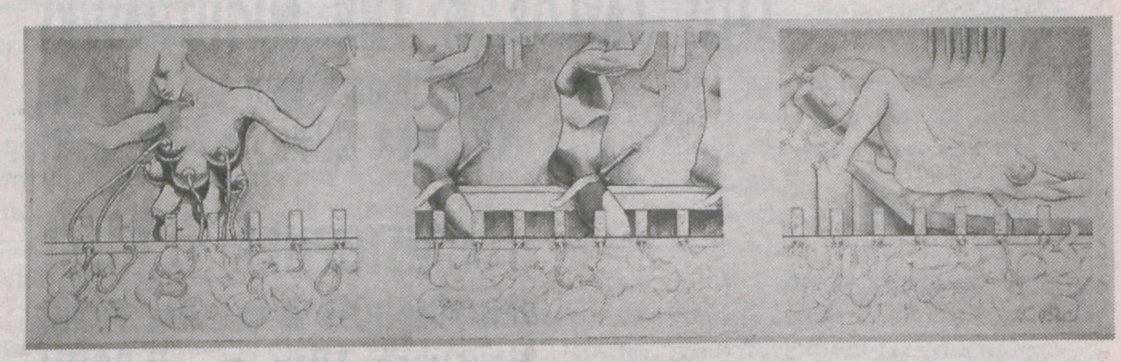
For youngsters, classes include Animal Drawing for Kids, ages 7 to 9; Art for Kids, Drawing and Painting for Kids, Junior Drawing and Painting, Clay for Kids, and Fantasy Art.

Info: 717-236-1432

By: Andrew Guth



By: Robert Hughes



By: Kristen Kest

Gallery Blu Embraces LGBT Community

Gallery Blu's tag line is "Embracing Community through Art" and there new show in conjunction with "Third in the 'Burg." opening July 16, 7 p.m. is an example. The gallery is located at 1633 N. Third St., Harrisburg. The show runs through Aug. 30.

"It is our wish to embrace the lgbt community through this show, " says gallery owner Christina Heintzelman-Jones. She's working with the LGBT Community Center Coalition on the show. Artists presented are from the gay community and include Kristin Kest, Robert Hughes, Andrew Guth, Jeff Lynch, Leah B and Jim Wolland.

The show is a fundraiser for the LGBT Community Center Coalition and the gallery is donating 15% of their commissions on any sold pieces, Heintzelman-Jones says.

"One of the things that I have always valued about the arts community in Harrisburg, and probably the reason that I came back to Harrisburg when my children were grown and gone, was the level of acceptance that the community has for creative arts," says Jim Woland.

"Creativity is valued above ideology, religious choice, political choice, or sexual choice. And that's a great thing. In my neighborhood we have gays and straights and trandsgender, and white collars and blue collars, and blacks and whites, and Asians and Hispanics, wealthy and middle class, and homeless," Woland says.

Ray Ficca, Charles Q. "CQ" Smith and Elise Overcash

Totem Pole Playhouse Seeks to Raise $2.5 Million

Totem Pole Playhouse board of directors announced a $1 million pledge at its kick-off celebration for a $ 2.5 million capital campaign. The campaign called "Recalling the Past, Embracing the Future" has already received $100,000 of the million dollar pledge.

The donor, Charles Q. Smith, has asked that recognition be given in memory of his mother, Jessica Weaver Smith who was a season subscriber to Totem Pole since its beginning in 1950. "My mother used to 'drag' me and my dad to the original concrete block pill box called a theatre near Pine Grove Furnace," said Smith.

Ray Ficca, the 4th artistic director of the theatre states, "Mr. Smith's pledge will help bring the 40 year old theatre into the 21st century and beyond."

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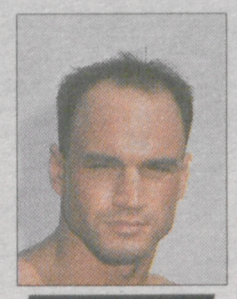

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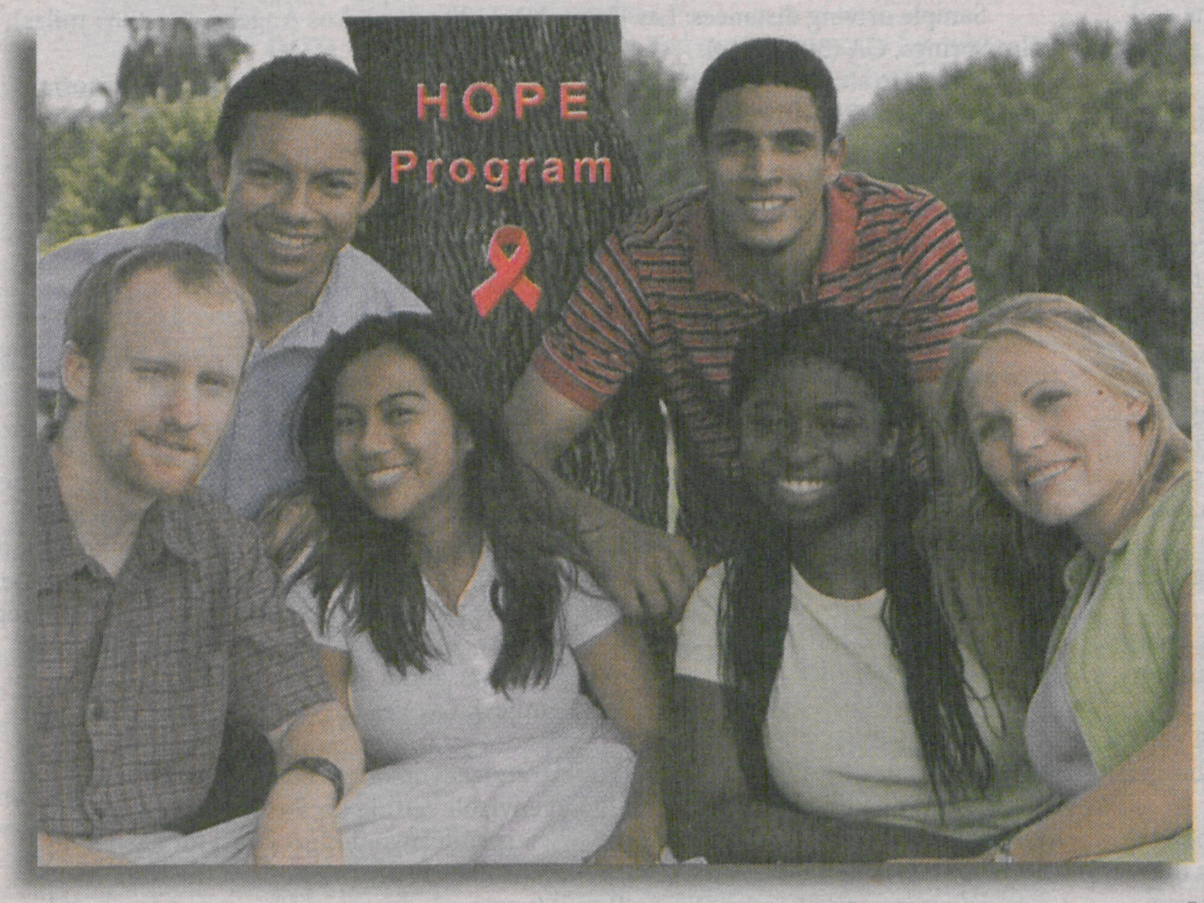

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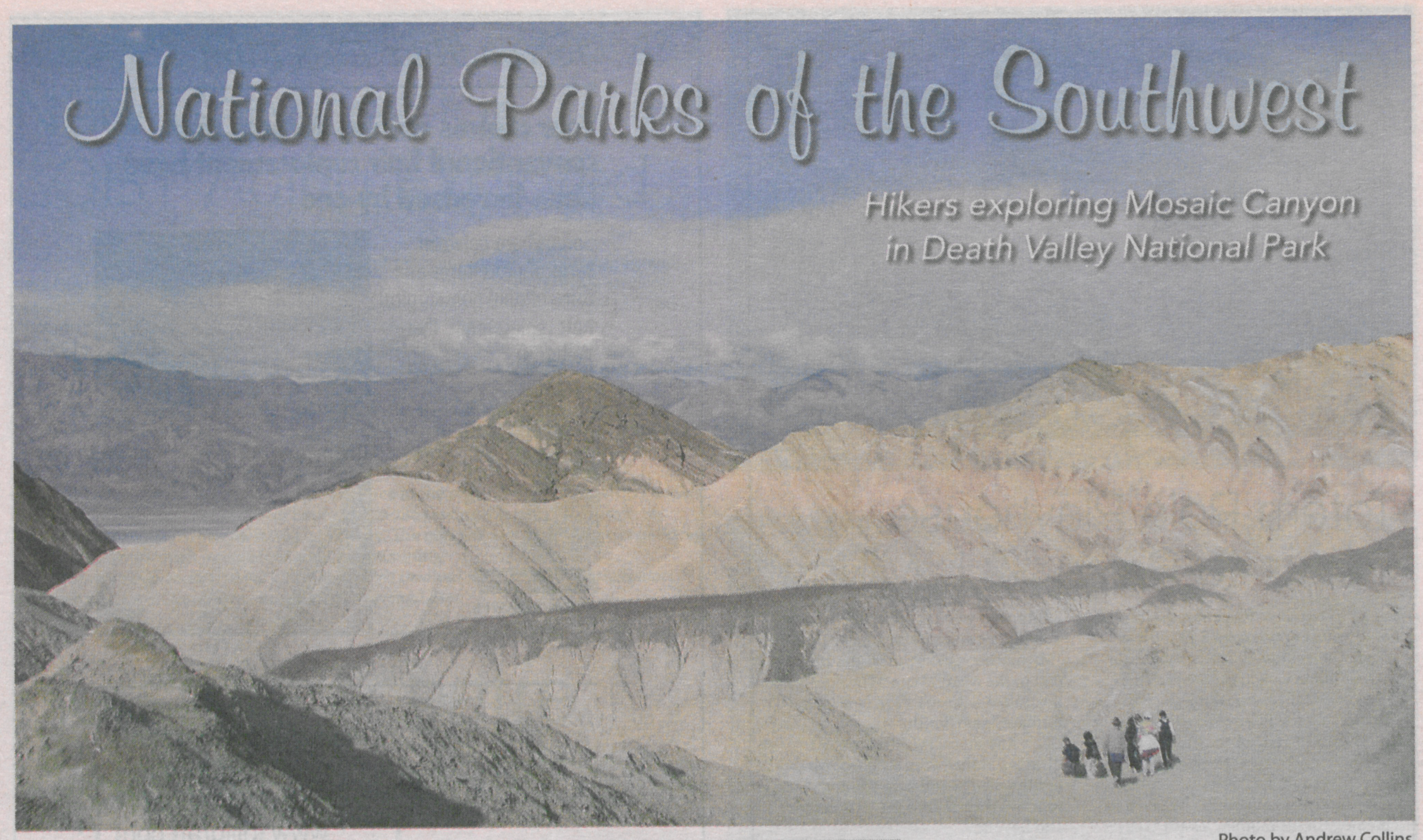
National Parks of the Southwest



Hikers exploring Mosaic Canyon in Death Valley National Park

Photo by Andrew Collins

OUT OF TOWN
by Andrew Collins

Visitation at America's best-known national parks has skyrocketed in recent years, so it's no surprise that these monuments to natural scenery and wide-open spaces have become increasingly popular with gays and lesbians. Whether you're into camping, serious hiking and off-road trekking, or you're more likely to stay in a romantic lodge, check out the park museums and spend most of your time in your car, you'll be happy to know that most national parks offer a balance of both mellow and rigorous diversions.

The southwestern United States, from the sweeping deserts of interior Southern California to the spectacular rock formations, deep canyons and craggy cliffs of Arizona and Utah, contains several of the nation's most celebrated national parks. Here's a look at five of the most impressive.

Arches and Canyonlands national parks, Utah (www.nps.gov/arch, www.nps.gov/cany)

Of the five national parks and one national monument in southeastern Utah, Arches and Canyonlands - which lie close together, near the funky and low-keyed town of Moab - are among the most memorable. The Colorado River cuts through the southern edge of Arches and then - where it's joined by the Green River - snakes around the brilliant red sandstone formations of Canyonlands. The latter park takes days to investigate thoroughly. It comprises four districts, all miles from one another by car.

At Arches, on the other hand, you can get a quick sense of the park's grandeur in one day. More than 2,000 sandstone arches - some of them as tall as 50 feet - dot this jagged, almost surreal landscape. A paved road allows access to most attractions, but you have to get out and follow one of the many trails to truly appreciate the park. The must-see is Delicate Arch, reached via a moderately strenuous 3-mile round-trip trail (with an ascent of 500 feet).

Driving distances: Salt Lake, UT (225 miles), Aspen, CO (230 miles), Las Vegas, NV (450 miles).

Where to stay: Sorrel River Ranch (www.sorrelriver.com) for elegantly rustic accommodations by the Colorado River, and Mayor's House B&B (www.mayorshouse.com) for attractive, mid-priced rooms in downtown Moab.

Where to eat: Sorrel River Ranch (www.sorrelriver.com) for upscale, regional American fare, Eddie McStiff's (www.eddiemcstiffs.com) for local microbrews and great burgers.

Death Valley National Park (www.nps.gov/deva), California

Covering an astounding 5,200 square miles (making it just slightly smaller than the state of Connecticut), Death Valley National Park is immense in scope - it contains the lowest point in the United States, Badwater Basin, a salty, mud-caked spot that you can walk to easily from the road. And it claims the hottest summer temperatures in the country (late fall through early spring are mild and comfortable, however). But the park's extreme aspects sometimes take away from the tremendous diversity of its terrain, from the cooler high mountains peaks (some with elevations above 10,000 feet) that overlook the valley to the undulating sand dunes near Stovepipe Wells.

You could explore Death Valley for a full week and never come close to seeing all of the park's notable sites - the remains of historic borax works, hikes through the dramatically colored rock formations of Mosaic Canyon, costumed tours of the remote and eccentric 1920s mansion known as Scotty's Castle. This is one park, because of its enormity, where it can be very helpful to book a guided excursion - Pink Jeep Tours offers informative trips around the park in modern, comfortable, fully enclosed vehicles.

Sample driving distances: Las Vegas, NV (120 miles), Los Angeles, CA (285 miles), Palm Springs, CA (300 miles).

Where to stay: Inn at Furnace Creek (www.furnacecreekresort.com) for historic, atmospheric rooms with expansive valley views, and Ranch at Furnace Creek (www.furnacecreekresort.com) for affordable, smartly furnished rooms in the heart of the park.

Where to eat: Inn at Furnace Creek (www.furnacecreekresort.com) for truly exceptional, creatively prepared American food and a lavish Sunday brunch, and Wrangler Steakhouse (www.furnacecreekresort.com) for hearty burgers and steaks.

Grand Canyon National Park (www.nps.gov/grca), Arizona

It's fair to say that enough has been written and said about the Grand Canyon that even those who've never been often feel they have a good sense of it. Still, it's nearly impossible to comprehend the full splendor of this massive chasm that's 18 miles across, 300 miles long, and over a mile deep - it must be seen to be believed.

A surprising number of visitors come by for a day, stop by a few viewpoints, and continue on. If at all possible, try to spend at least a couple of days here. The South Rim is the most accessible than its higher-altitude counterpart, the North Rim (which is also closed in winter). On an ideal visit to the South Rim, you'll stay at one of the several lodging options inside the park (book many months in advance if you're planning a summer visit), hike at least part of the way into the canyon, and ride the park shuttle bus along the rim, stopping at the many noteworthy viewing areas. If you have extra time, consider riding the scenic Grand Canyon Railway from the town of Williams, about 60 miles south.

Driving distances: Phoenix, AZ (230 miles), Las Vegas, NV (280 miles), Albuquerque, NM (400 miles).

Where to stay: El Tovar Hotel (www.grandcanyonlodges.com) for its architectural significance, upscale accommodations, and enviable setting on the South Rim, and the nearby Bright Angel Lodge and Cabins (www.grandcanyonlodges.com) for less pricey rooms and wonderfully charming rustic cabins that are also steps from the Rim.

Where to eat: El Tovar Dining Room (www.grandcanyonlodges.com) for its old-world elegance, and Cameron Trading Post (www.camerontradingpost.com) for simple, hearty, and delicious Southwestern and Native American cooking about 30 miles from the

continued on page 30

Issue Analysis:
Why We Need Better Protections

By Pete Olsen
Central Voice Correspondent

When I first read the article in Edge: Boston on April 5 about the physical beating and threats committed by three men against Phillip Nelson, a 24-year old college student who was living in Claremore, Oklahoma, a town of 20,000 people, twenty-five miles northeast of Tulsa, I was appalled for several reasons.

Pete Olsen

First, all hate crimes by their very nature are despicable and reprehensible. Second, the response by the local police departments was slow to nonexistent and arguably corrupt. Third, and most disheartening, Phillip endured the attacks almost casually, considering them among a lifelong trend of discriminatory treatment to which he was numb.

Phillip's story, shared by far too many, exemplifies the need for increased legal protections for the lgbt community – increased protection for students who are bullied, passing the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," etc.

A week later, while taking out the trash during his spring break, three men assaulted him. They screamed, "faggot!" and yelled, "you're going to die!" as they beat him up.

After Phillip was assaulted, the Edge quoted him saying: "I've been called names all my life, even by my family members; and after a while I learned to get numb from it. I just got numb from a lot of things. I'm happy with myself and that's all that matters."

I commend Phillip's strength, courage, pride, and self-confidence; however, I was demoralized to learn that a young adult would get accustomed to this treatment, to be so downtrodden that a hate crime would be considered routine, especially knowing that countless gay youth face discrimination at home and in their churches and are bullied at schools across the country.

I had the opportunity to interview Phillip and learned that what I thought to be an isolated attack was actually part of a series of three related acts of discrimination in 2010. And as a result, Phillip was forced to drop out from his current semester of studies, moving from Oklahoma to Texas just to be safe on a day-to-day basis. I learned more about the depth of Phillip's personal and familial history – a history defined by religion, bullying, and the death of his parents – causing Phillip to be both numb to discrimination while strengthening him to persevere through anything life would send his way.

Phillip's struggle as a child and in 2010 is just one case among many that embodies the need for better legal protection at the federal and state level.

Phillip came out at age 11, yet even before it was official, people knew. He never hid it, because he never felt he should – it was the way he was born. He remembers getting caught playing with Barbies. He carried a picture of the green Power Ranger with him. He was in love with the green ranger; he just knew they were going to get married someday.

Like far too many gay youth that come from an evangelical Christian home in the bible belt of the country, this sort of behavior and coming out was not well-received. His family would preach against him, saying he was going to burn in hell for his sins.

Phillip told me the best years of his life were during elementary school, because by junior high, the bullying was relentless torture. His schoolmates called him faggot constantly. They would throw soda cans at him. After his father died of cancer when Phillip was 15, and his mother already having passed in a car accident when he was 8, his peers added "orphan boy" to the flurry of insults.

He had nowhere to turn for support. The only members of his immediately family alive, his older brother and sister, despised who he was, and his churched considered him to be filled with demons.

While Phillip would have many reasons to turn away from Christianity, his faith remains strong. He embraced the true, positive tenets of the religion, and that was the one constant in his life that he could cling to during troubling times. It granted him the stability and strength he needed to survive the bullying in his youth, to understand the death of his mom and dad, and, fast-forwarding to 2010, to overcome a series of hate crimes forcing him to drop out of school and move to a new state.

Bible with "fag" carved into cover left at Nelson's doorstep.

Although Phillip would consider 2010 just another year facing discrimination and bigotry, I would call it a nightmare year with life-changing consequences.

The first warning sign was a bible with "fag" carved into the cover left at his doorstep in early March.

A week later, while taking out the trash during his spring break, three men assaulted him. They screamed, "faggot!" and yelled, "you're going to die!" as they beat him up. A few days later, the attackers broke into his apartment and wrote "fag" across his wall. The Claremore Police Department was slow to respond to the attack or to Phillip's calls to fill out a police report. Later, when Phillip attempted to follow up on the reports, they had mysteriously gone missing.

The story of the attack was covered by the local news, and while it is important that people hear about hate crimes, it was bad for Phillip: now, he would be a known homosexual everywhere he went. This infamy led to Phillip being harassed, threatened with violence, and thrown out of a karaoke bar in Tulsa last April 3. The managers of the bar recognized him from TV, and the DJ, who was the bar owner's wife, announced on the microphone, "we don't like faggots in our bar." A group of bikers and other friends of the bar owners showed up yielding weapons, forcing Phillip and his friend to leave. Again, Phillip filed a police report with the Tulsa Police Department. This time, however, he took a picture of the report in the event it too would go missing.

His sister, now a Sunday school teacher, had the nerve to blame Phillip for these events. She told him that if he would have kept his mouth shut, none of this would have happened.

In response, and understandably, Phillip no longer feels safe in Oklahoma. He dropped out of his university classes studying art and contemporary dance, and since it was after the standard date to withdraw, he now has an entire semester of "W's" on his transcript.

He has since moved to Irving, Texas to be with his partner. He was planning to return to Oklahoma to attend an anniversary memorial for his dad, but again, considering it too dangerous, he stayed in Oklahoma opting to hold his own personal memorial playing a Janis Joplin record he found among his dad's belongings.

Phillip's struggle as a child and in 2010 is just one case among many that embodies the need for better legal protection at the federal and state level.

Students should not be bullied in school due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. They should feel safe in

Phillip Nelson

At left: Nelson after 3 men allegedly assaulted him while taking out his garbage.

that environment to focus on their studies. They should feel confident that they can seek support from their administrators and that their pleas will be properly heard and swiftly remedied. As far too many schools and school districts have proven to be incapable, the only solution for this problem is federal legislation mandating protective procedures.

Oklahoma State Senator Steve Russell

States need to embrace enforcing the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, rather than attempting to make the federal enforcement process complicated. Oklahoma State Senator Steve Russell, tried to complicate matters by getting legislation through their Senate that would prohibit any local law enforcement agency from sharing information with a federal investigation of a hate crime. Thankfully, the legislation was blocked in Oklahoma's House.

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" needs to be repealed. ENDA needs to be passed.

During this pride season when you feel invigorated with a sense of community and advocacy, educate yourself on the current status of state and federal laws. Pennsylvania laws currently do not address hate crimes or workplace discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, provide any recognition for same-sex couples, or provide assurance for students who are bullied.

Once you educate yourself, use your voice: contact your local and state representatives to make your positions known. Send a message with your wallet: donate to supportive candidates' campaigns and be cognizant of the policies of the stores where you shop. And be certain to be represented: in November, remember to vote.

Pete Olsen, a law student at Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law, writes a blog on gay rights and the sports industry at www.WideRights.com. He was an intern at the acclaimed sports agency, Leigh Steinberg Sports & Entertainment.

Broadway's Laura Bell Bundy Is Legally Lovable

Broadway-turned-country star Laura Bell Bundy chats about her gay roots, country music's conservatism and working with Britney Spears

By Chris Azzopardi

Omigod, you guys: Laura Bell Bundy is, like, totally cool with you! That she has a country album out in a genre that has often been known for being conservative and not so vocal on queer issues doesn't mean the Kentucky cutie won't be. She had a gay following long before her debut with a bangin' Broadway career, playing roles in "Legally Blonde" and "Hairspray".

"Achin' & Shakin'", split between honky-tonk heartbreakers and campy country-dance, is riding on the first single – the infectious "Giddy on Up," which has also been remixed for the clubs. Here, Bundy chats about performing for the gays, her make-out music and how she's just like many of us.

What's it been like performing in gay venues?

When you do Broadway you tend to be performing for a very strong gay male contingency – and, you know what, I love it! It's more fun. I don't know whether it's because of "Legally Blonde" or because the music's a little brassy and ballsy – at least the "Shakin'" side is. But when I do the live shows, it's choreographed and I have two attractive male dancers dancing behind me. We have underwear that we pass out that says "Giddy on Up" on the front and "Giddy on Out" on the back. And we make the boys that I'm dancing with wear them.

Briefs?

Oh yeah.

Why did you decide to split the album into two themes?

I had wanted to do Norah Jones for country when I first started writing, and then I thought, No, I need to be able to do some up-tempo dance – maybe more of an Amy Winehouse country.

So over the course of a year I started to write in those two different directions, providing a mood for the listener because I always listen to music based on the playlist I've made, like I have a workout playlist, I have a make-out playlist and a wallow-in-your-sorrow and a walking-down-the-street playlist. I really wanted to provide two different moods – like an old record.

Name some songs on that make-out playlist.

Lots of Norah Jones. I have Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You Too Long," "Just One Kiss" by Raphael Saadiq and Joss Stone, and some Pete Yorn and Iron and Wine.

So more romantic than sexual.

Yeah, it's more romantic, but I do have one with Jay-Z and stuff on it (laughs).

I "thought" you might have a naughty side, especially after hearing some of the innuendo on "Rebound," which sounds pro-quickie to me.

(Laughs) I'm not pro-quickie, honey! I'm pro-let's-do-it-till-the-job's-done. But "Rebound" is more, I'm telling you right now I'm rebounding and I don't want to commit with you, and if you like it you don't have to put a ring on it.

I know that you're a big Dolly Parton fan, and I definitely sense her influence in the music. How did she shape your sound?

I love her! I love how she just commits to whatever emotion or story she's telling, and she's just sassy and she's got a great sense of humor. And I like her sound – the bluegrass and the production style of a lot of her records, I'm drawn to that.

I hear that in your own music, along with some of your musical-theater influences.

I don't really feel like I tried to put any musical theater in it. The only thing that might feel musical theater is the fact that I can be a bit campy and I like to use a

continued on page 31

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Media sponsor: 105.7 The X

Hotel California: A Salute to The Eagles
Fri., Apr. 1 • 7:30pm

Popovich Comedy Pet Theater
Sat., Apr. 2 • 7:30pm Media sponsor: Family49

Spring Awakening Sat., Apr. 9 • 2:00 & 7:30pm
(Not suitable for all audiences)

The Improvised Shakespeare Co.
Sat., Apr. 30 • 7:30pm

Bixby's Rainforest Rescue
Sun., May 1 • 4:00pm

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Recruiting LGBT Added to Effort

Top professional services firms Marsh & McLennan Companies, Inc. (MMC) and Heidrick & Struggles International, Inc. (HSII) have named six minority- and women-owned search firms to their "Inclusion Network," a new diversity recruiting initiative the two firms announced last spring.

Designed to attract a broader and more diverse talent pool to MMC, a provider of risk, strategy, and human capital solutions, the Inclusion Network program is managed by Heidrick & Struggles – a leadership advisory firm providing senior-level executive search and leadership consulting services – as part of a full suite of talent solutions the company offers

The six firms participating in the Inclusion Network are The Hollins Group and Youngblood Executive Search, both based in Chicago; CREW Advisory Services, Quinn & Associates, and Wesley, Brown and Bartle Co., Inc., all based in New York; and McCormack & Associates, based in Los Angeles. Under the Inclusion Network program, when Heidrick & Struggles receives assignments from MMC, it then works with the Network members,, who are generalist search firms with Diversity practices, to fulfill these searches. Two of the firms have been engaged for search assignments since the program began in January.

"After we announced the initiative last year, we received more than 50 inquiries from firms interested in participating in the network," says Billy Dexter, Partner at Heidrick & Struggles. "We rigorously reviewed and interviewed the firms, and identified six superior firms whose complementary with Heidrick's own services make them ideal partners in our Inclusion Network."

"This innovative diversity recruiting solution provides new opportunities for each of the participating parties," says Kathryn Komsa, Chief Diversity Officer at MMC. "For MMC, the strong industry knowledge and global network of Heidrick & Struggles, combined with the specialized networks and expertise of our Inclusion Network firms, make this an ideal program for identifying and attracting the broad talent base we need to compete effectively, while also broadening our diverse supplier base."

The Inclusion Network program, piloted by Heidrick & Struggles and MMC, is part of the Diversity Advisory Services Practice at Heidrick, offering a comprehensive set of solutions for clients looking to expand diversity not only in their workforce but also in their vendor set. In addition to providing access to a broader range of candidates, including women, people of color, and members of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) communities to clients, Heidrick & Struggles will also assist with leadership consulting, training, and other services with the Network search firms.

"Working with Heidrick & Struggles on this initiative is a terrific opportunity to raise the profile of member firms and share our strengths in building the most talented and diverse workforce that clients need to compete globally today," says Larry Hollins of The Hollins Group.

"We hope that through this initiative we can further solidify the commitment to diversity in the search industry," says Mr. Dexter. "This is a program that allows us to offer a unique approach to creating a more inclusive workplace andthat we plan to roll it out globally for our clients, and allows us to offer a unique approach to creating a more inclusive workplace."

PFLAG Goes Straight cont'd

The Amazing Race fame said his parents attend PFLAG meetings bimonthly, and credited the organization with changing their minds about his sexual orientation.

"It helped them understand the lifestyle that I have and why it didn't mean they were horrible parents or that there was something wrong with me. I'm really thankful for that and owe a lot to PFLAG," said Lehmkul.

The event successfully brought together the gay and straight communities to effect long-lasting change in entertainment, sports, the media, and business—an alliance that PFLAG's National Executive Director Jody Huckaby said is crucial for the success of the movement.

"I think our event is very different because we celebrate all the allies supporting the LGBT community, who don't get enough credit. The way we're really going to be able to move ahead is to get the support
of everyone else in the community, that other 90 percent," said Huckaby.

Representatives from the Imperial Court of New York were equally as excited about the partnership, with Princess Royale Bonbon LaRue saying, "It's important to celebrate and support all of the organizations that share the same philosophy, so that together as a larger group we are able to raise additional funds and show the outside community how powerful we are—both inside the LGBT rights movement, and within the supportive straight community."

For information about PFLAG's Straight for Equality program, visit www.pflag.org.

At press time, news blog TMZ reported Minelli had turned down a deal with "Celebrity Rehab". "We're told Liza 'flipped out' when we broke the story earlier today that she was in talks to work out a deal in the $500,000 universe - and now she's put the whole thing to bed." An inside source at the show told TMZ they're not giving up - adding, "We want her in the Mackenzie Phillips/Gary Busey position - already sober but strengthening her sobriety. We would not portray her as a drug addict."

MCC column

The Season of Pride

By Rev. Charles Tigard
Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit

This summer communities around the world will gather to celebrate life and love and all that we have accomplished as a people on the journey toward justice.

Pride reminds us of the work ahead. The season of pride is a celebration and a call to action.

We are especially mindful of our sisters and brothers serving courageously in the military. We must work to quickly end the 'don't ask don't tell' policy which bans LGBT people from serving openly.

This year's pride theme highlights the importance of equality- achieving unity in our diversity.

It's important to set aside moments to celebrate and acknowledge diversity. Living with difference is work. Diversity asks us to see value in the experience of others.

Diversity is the core of who we are as lgbt people. Individuals from vastly different backgrounds will join our voices in struggle and celebration.

Our community is continually challenged to increase the scope of our welcome. This means being willing to examine our own fears, assumptions and prejudices- to expand the circle of human family.

Every Sunday at MCC we begin with a simple affirmation: "Whoever you are and wherever you come from on your life's journey you are welcome in this place."

Pride is a celebration of the discovery of our true selves- a celebration of love in its many beautiful and varied forms. There is a big difference between acceptance and celebration!

Our season of pride in the region will conclude with two services:

Celebration Worship Service

Sunday, July 25, 10 a.m. at MCC of the Spirit. Join us Sunday morning in our Sanctuary for uplifting praise and worship.

Spirits United Interfaith Service

Sunday, July 25, 7 p.m. at MCC of the Spirit. Join with your brothers and sisters of all faiths as we gather to celebrate our unity as we bring 2010 Pride Festival to a close.

In honesty- in truth- working toward equality- there is so much power.

In this season of pride and celebration let's commit again to the work of justice and liberation- standing unified in our diversity.

Rev. Charles Tigard serves as Interim Pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, Harrisburg. MCCoftheSpirit.org.

Quartet of Summer Soirees Set

The popular "Summer Soirees" return this year as a quartet, each with a woodland title: "Escape Into an Urban Wood," "Winery By the Woods," "Mother and Daughter Present Into the Woods," and "Under the Oaks,". The fundraising events are held July through August.

The first in the quartet benefits The Art Association of Harrisburg and is hosted by Midtown attorney Kathy Speaker MacNett at her home, 224 N. St., Harrisburg, July 31, 5-8 p.m. "Escape Into an Urban Wood," held in her garden nestled behind her restored historic home, features watercolors and prints by Pat Adams, acrylics and giclees by Marilyn LaDieu, and varied media by her neighbors Patricia Hutchins and Steve Shaw. Music will enhance the gracious ambiance, provided by harpist Jay Risser and cellist Steve Lavender. Hors d'ouevres and libations will complete the evening's attractions.

Aug. 7, The Hunters Valley Winery in Liverpool is the unique setting for "Winery By the Woods" from 5 – 8 p.m. Winery owners Darlene and Bill Kvaternik welcome attendees to sample their fine wines and enjoy hors d'ouevres while enjoying the landscapes created by artists who have painted there en plein aire in the past. Featured artists are Pat Koscienski, Stephen Wetzel, Jon Tritt, Cathy Mabius, Madeline Reiley, Ralph Hocker, and Robert Hughes. Soothing live music will complete the magical ambiance of the setting overlooking the Susquehanna River.

Mother and daughter Kathy Marley-Dunbar and Lora Millar invite attendees "Into the Woods" at the Millars' home east of Harrisburg, off Linglestown Road, Aug. 14, 5-8 p.m. Artists showcased include Seven Lively original Earl Blust; painter Terry Croteau; photographer Fred Gantz; and jeweler Barbara Gutekunst. Lively music by guitarist Hal Fox and his violinist wife Felicity will set the tone for a magical evening as guests venture "into the woods." Refreshments and beverages will be served.

Renee Lieux and her husband Kirk Brechbiel invite guests to "Under the Oaks" on the lawn of their restored Indiana Avenue, Lemoyne, home Aug. 21, 5-8 p.m. Landscape artists Brian Eppley, Jonathan Frazier, Paul Gallo and Barbara Warfel will display their paintings while attendees nibble on hors d'ouevres and sip beverages in the soft evening light.

The soirees proceeds benefit AAH education and exhibition programming. Tickets are $35 in advance, $40 at the door. Directions will be provided to attendees when they register, either via the AAH website at www.artassocofhbg.com, by phone, or by mail. Call 717-236-1432 for more information.

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging Opens

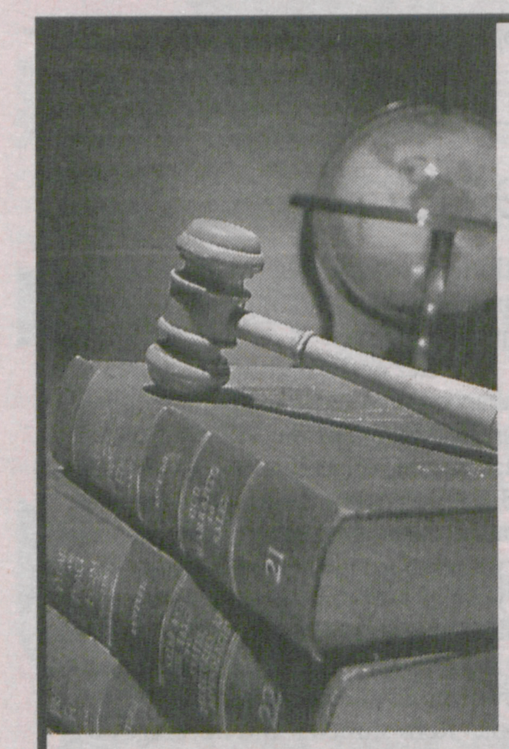
Last month, Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) celebrated the launch of the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging in its Manhattan offices. The Resource Center is the first of its kind and will provide training on lgbt issues to mainstream service providers for aging and on aging concerns to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender agencies nationwide. It will also offer critically important educational tools to older people.

Earlier this year, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and the Administration on Aging awarded SAGE and 10 partner organizations from around the country a historic grant to establish the National Resource Center on LGBT Aging.

"We are living in an unprecedented time, especially for caregivers, healthcare facilities and communities that serve lgbt older adults," said Michael Adams, executive director of SAGE, the world's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lgbt older adults. "Our country is witnessing the first generation in history to live and age more openly as lgbt people—going into the closet to access vital services isn't an option."

The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging will provide tools and resources to assist communities across the country in their efforts to provide services and support for older adults. It will also aid lgbt people in planning for their own long-term needs. In the fall, the Resource Center will launch a web site that will begin providing vital information to these audiences to ensure that lgbt older adults are supported in all parts of the country.

SAGE is the world's oldest and largest organizations dedicated to improving the lives of lgbt older adults. Since its inception, SAGE has pioneered programs and services for seniors in the lgbt community, provided technical assistance and training to expand opportunities for older people across the country, and provided a national voice on lgbt aging issues. Info: www.sageusa.com



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Out of Town cont'd

park's east entrance.

Joshua Tree National Park (www.nps.gov/jotr), California

A short drive from the world-famous gay resort Palm Springs, this 800,000-acre park at the convergence of the deathly hot Colorado and slightly cooler Mojave deserts feels miles away from civilization. It looks almost lunar like in places. Of course, it's famous for the thousands of curious-looking Joshua trees for which the park is named. These distinctive members of the lily family grow about an inch a year and bloom winsome white flowers ever so rarely.

This aside, seeing a Joshua tree is but a minor reason to visit. There are several scenic drives - the 6-mile spur out to 5,100-foot Keys View affords breathtaking vistas over the entire Coachella Valley. Several short but fascinating trails penetrate the park's myriad ecosystems: a brief scramble through the Cholla Cactus Garden will introduce you to the regional flora, while the 1.3-mile High View Nature Trail entails a 300-foot ascent to magnificent Summit Peak. Longer trails past piles of massive boulders and by oasis like hot springs offer the possibility of spying bighorn sheep and golden eagles.

Driving distances: Palm Springs, CA (50 miles), Los Angeles, CA (150 miles), Phoenix, AZ (270 miles).

Where to stay: Palm Springs Riviera Resort & Spa (www.psriviera.com) for swanky, over-the-top whimsical rooms, and Ace Hotel Palm Springs (www.acehotel.com/palmsprings) for economical, arty rooms and a retro-hip attitude.

Where to eat: Copleys on Palm Canyon (www.copleyspalmsprings.com) for stellar contemporary American cuisine, and Wang's in the Desert (www.wangsinthedesert.com) for enticing pan-Asian fare and a hugely gay-popular happy hour.

Saguaro National Park, Arizona (www.nps.gov/sagu)

Comprising two distinct districts that bracket the scenic city of Tucson, this 91,000-acre park is named for the captivating, cartoonlike saguaro cacti that dot the region. These massive plants, with enormous forks, tower as high as 50 feet and grow at an amazingly slow rate of speed - many are well over a century old. Although the park is dedicated to preserving the saguaro landscape, it's actually a preserve of countless types of flora and fauna that thrive in the Sonoran desert, from cholla cactus to elusive pig-like javelina.

You'll find visitor centers, scenic park drives, and numerous trails in both sections of the park, one about 15 miles east of downtown Tucson, and the other roughly 20 miles to the west. Highlights include the 8-mile Cactus Forest Drive loop-road, in the eastern section, which has several short and notable hikes off of it. If you're exploring the western sections, drive along the Bajada Loop Drive, setting aside an hour or so to stroll the short Valley View Overlook Trail - this is one of the best photo ops in the park. And while you're at the western part of the park, check out the nearby Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, where naturalistic enclosures provide a viewable habitat for more than 300 different animal species indigenous to this part of the Southwest.

Driving distances: Phoenix, AZ (130 miles), San Diego, CA (425 miles), Albuquerque, NM (440 miles).

Where to stay: The new Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain (www.ritzcarlton.com) for its thoroughly posh yet refreshingly hip and modern vibe, and Hotel Congress (www.hotelcongress.com) for rock-bottom-priced, funky rooms on the edge of Tucson's gay-popular 4th Avenue district.

Where to eat: Janos (www.janos.com) for refined classically inspired Southwestern cuisine, and Bentley's Coffeehouse (www.bentleyscoffeehouse.com) for inexpensive coffees, terrific sandwiches and salads, along with fun people watching.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutofTown@qsyndicate.com.

Screenplay Contest Seeks Entries

The One in Ten Screenplay Contest, a screenplay contest dedicated to the positive portrayal of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trangender and queer individuals in film, celebrates its 12th anniversary in 2010. Entries are now being accepted online and are limited to the first 600 for 2010. Executive Director, David Jensen, "We are excited to celebrate our 12th anniversary and are looking at a record number of entries this year. We are continually amazed with the quality of talent that comes through the door year after year." Jensen continues, "We receive entries from around the globe and Hollywood is taking notice in a very big way. Many of our past winners are now hard working screenwriters. Last year's winner has received substantial interest and representation by one of Hollywood's top management and production houses."

Prizes for 2010 include cash, industry exposure and merchandise. The 2010 One In Ten Screenplay Contest is sponsored by: Cherub Productions, Hollywood Creative Directory, www.iScript.com, Brainstorm Warehouse, LLC, Michael Weise Productions, www.ScriptPIMP.com, www.ScriptDelivery.net , www.TopFilmFestivals.com , www.ScreenplayContests.com and Jungle Software. The submission deadline is Sept. 1, 2010. Entry forms are available online through the contest website: www.OneInTenScreenplayContest.com. *Entry forms may also be obtained through the mail by sending a self addressed stamped envelope to:*

Cherub Productions
One In Ten Screenplay Contest
Post Office Box 540
Boulder, Colorado 80306
(303) 629-3072
www.OneInTenScreenplayContest.com
E-mail: Cherubfilm@aol.com

HERSHEY THEATRE

Ballroom with a Twist
July 17, 8 p.m.
Ballroom with a Twist is a brilliant new dance production directed and choreographed by Dancing With the Stars own, Emmy nominated, Louis van Amstel. Louis brings the same passion, expertise and excitement to Ballroom with a Twist as he exhibited on television with his celebrity partners: Kelly Osbourne, Priscilla Presley and Lisa Rinna, and as the choreographer of the live Dancing With the Stars tour.
Tickets: $100, $65, $60, $50, $25

Guess Who's Coming To Dinner
July 25, 2 p.m.
Tickets: $7 each or 6-packs for $30; these tickets will be valid for the entire 2010-2011 season Also available: $10 ticket for both the movie and admission to "1968 in America" at The Hershey Story. The classic film "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" will be shown on Sunday, July 25 at 2:00 PM. Starring Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Sidney Poitier and Katharine Houghton, this was labeled as a contemporary love story in 1968.
717-534-3405, 1-800-745-3000, HersheyTheatre.com.

WHITAKER CENTER

Bruce in the USA
July 9, 8 p.m.
Sunoco Performance Theater
Tickets $28.50
Central PA Cancer Charity Benefit (CPACCB) together with Bruce in the USA create an evening of generousity and intense musical entertainment. Matt Ryan, from the World Famous Legends In Concert cast, played the Springsteen character for eight years, in their full scale Las Vegas show. His amazing portrayal of "The Boss" is as close as you can get to see the real thing in concert. 717-214-ARTS (2787)

John Edward Group
Aug. 21, 7:30 p.m.
Sunoco Performance Theater
Tickets $125
Internationally acclaimed psychic medium John Edward has captivated audiences worldwide. Since the age of 15, John has connected countless families – from A-list celebrities to housewives – with those they have loved and lost. After 25 years, the message of his work remains unchanged and infinitely simple: communicate, appreciate and validate. 717-214-ARTS (2787)

CARLISLE THEATRE

Joseph and the Amazing Technocolor Dreamcoat
July 3, 7 p.m.; July 4, 2 p.m.; July 9, 7 p.m.; July 10, 7 p.m.
The saga of Joseph and his coat of many colors comes to vibrant life in this delightful musical parable. Set to an engaging cornucopia of musical styles, from country-western and calypso to bubble-gum pop and rock 'n' roll, this Old Testament tale emerges both timely and timeless. This colorful retelling of the biblical story about Joseph, his uncanny abilities and his designer coat sings out to young and old alike with a score which is wall to wall hits - including "Close Every Door" and "Any Dream Will Do."
40 W. High St., Carlisle, PA 17013; (717) 258-0666

STRAND-CAPITAL

CapLive - Dawes
July 29, 8 p.m.
Capitol Theatre
With comparisons to Graham Parker, Neil Young, the Byrds, Stephen Stills, Creedance and The Band, Dawes are "some of the most promising purveyors of new-school country folk" (Rolling Stone). The stripped-down, dusty-hands country sound and rock-solid songwriting in their debut release, North Hills, coupled with four-part harmony and boundless energy of the members, create a live show that "is another monster altogether"!
Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center, 50 N. George Street, York, PA 17401; Tickets: 717.846.1111.

YORK LITTLE THEATRE

The Wedding Singer (Mainstage)
JULY 9-11, 15-18 & 22-25
It's 1985 and rock-star wannabe Robbie Hart is New Jersey's favorite wedding singer. He's the life of the party, until his own fiancee leaves him at the altar. Shot through the heart, Robbie makes every wedding as disastrous as his own. Adults $20; Seniors $18; Students $15; Children 12 & under $10; Student Rush Saturdays after 7:30 at the door; $1027 S. YLT, Belmont St., York PA 17403, 717-854-5715, www.ylt.org

Laura Bell Bundy cont'd

sense of humor and crack a joke within the lyrics. I love punchlines.

Was it your idea to do remixes of "Giddy on Up"?

Honestly, it was not. I knew that we wanted to do dance remixes because I wanted to bring this shit to Europe.

And the gay clubs?

I totally wanted to have it for the gay clubs. Absolutely. There is an amazing gay man I work with who also thought it would be a great idea to do that. It was several people at the label and me who were like, "Let's do it." I've always wanted to do some special performances or special remixes for the gay community because that's my fan base in a lot of ways.

Tell me more about the relationship with your gay fans and colleagues.

I began doing professional theater in New York when I was 9 years old with _Christmas Spectacular_. My singing teacher when I was a young child was a gay man who unfortunately passed away from AIDS, which has made me a big supporter of Equity Fights AIDS and those programs.

I starred in this show called "Ruthless! The Musical", which was the beginning of the gay community being aware of who I was because it was the campiest show you could ever imagine. It was very cult. Years later I was in the original cast of "Hairspray", then "Wicked" and finally "Legally Blonde", which is like the ultimate. We'd have drag queens dressed in blonde wigs. Also, all of the people that I was ever hired by were either gay or Jewish. Or both.

I don't know whether it's that the genre that I was in, which was musical theater, tends to be run and formed and created by gay men, but I'm also drawn to it, and I'm also drawn to that kind of environment, and I'm also drawn to gay men – they understand me the best. And I understand them the best. It's a mutual kind of love. I learned how to perform from them.

You mentioned drag queens attending "Legally Blonde" – you know, it's only a matter of time before someone becomes a Laura Bell Bundy drag queen.

Hell yes! I can't wait! You know what's so funny is people ask me a lot, "Who are your country music influences?" And I say Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn and Reba. They're all gay icons. And considering all the music that I listened to as a kid – Julie Andrews and Judy Garland – I really was like a gay man (laughs). My mom is, too. Her openness to the gay community and her big Dolly Parton hair that attracted them, that probably opened the floodgates.

You were raised Catholic, though. That never conflicted with your beliefs on homosexuality?

No. I've always been of the mindset that you love all and you have compassion for all and all are accepted in the eyes of God, or whoever they believe in. I'll have friendships with anybody. I don't judge anybody for their sexual preferences or their lifestyle or anything.

Do you think country gets a bum rap and is unfairly called anti-gay?

I do, and you'd be surprised that it's not. I actually thought that country music in Nashville was much more conservative than it actually is. There are many more gay men involved in the country music industry than you would imagine.

Like who? Kenny Chesney?

Ahh. (Silence). In a perfect world it wouldn't matter.

Britney Spears was your understudy in "Ruthless!" Were there any signs that she might shave her head or flash her hoo-ha in public?

Oh no. None of that. Everybody always asks me, "Any signs that she would drop a baby?" No! She was a baby, for God's sake! I was 10; she was 9 – something like that.

Were you friends?

We were "friendly". We saw each other backstage and my mom and her mom talked, and over time I said "hi" to her in passing at different events, like when she came to see "Hairspray". That was it.

You do a lot of vocal impressions, right?

I do. I think I learned how to sing like that. I used to listen to all kinds of music, and I remember trying to – at 5 or 6 years old – make my voice sound exactly like the recording.

What were some of your favorite impressions?

Judy Garland – young and old, or sober and non-sober – and I do "The Wizard of Oz" impression of her. And then I do Julie Andrews, Celine Dion and Ethel Merman.

So a lot of old Hollywood.

Totally. Did I mention the similarities between a gay man and me? (Laughs)

Strand-Capital Names CEO

A veteran theater manager has been named President and Chief Executive Officer of the Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center. Kenneth Wesler, who started his career in 1989 as general manager of the nearby Mt. Gretna Theater, recently began his duties at the historic Strand-Capitol in Downtown York.

Following his work in Mt. Gretna, Wesler was managing director of the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia from 1989 to 1995. From there, he served as chief financial officer and then executive director of The Grand Opera House, Wilmington, Delaware.

In 2006 Wesler was named CEO of the Stamford Center for the Arts in Connecticut. Most recently, Ken has been a consultant for performing arts productions and management around the country.

A Temple University communication and theater graduate, Wesler also attended the Harvard Business School's Executive Education Program for Strategic Perspectives on Nonprofit Management in 1997. Wesler has been an adjunct faculty member at Springfield (MA) College and a guest lecturer at Temple University, the University of Delaware, Drexel University, and Cabrini College.

He has been involved with community and state activities in Pennsylvania and Delaware. A SCUBA-Certified Master Diver, Ken was a volunteer diver with the New Jersey State Aquarium. He and his wife, Deb, have two children: a son who is completing his advanced infantry training at Ft. Bragg, and a daughter, who will be a senior in high school.

20 Most Powerful Lesbians in American Politics

By David Mixner

Often very powerful and influential political lesbians are left off the usual national lgbt publications lists. No doubt many will question some of my choices and rankings. Others will question why a male is putting together such a list. You can have fun debating both of those points in the comments section.

To create this list, I eliminated anyone from the entertainment and sports community and focused totally on national politics and grassroots. So that leaves off such influential but not exclusively political heavy weights like Kate Clinton, Cynthia Nixon, Melissa Etheridge and Ellen DeGeneres. Some such as Nancy Sutley, who has a major position in the Obama team is lower in the list because she is not that active in lgbt issues or politics despite her powerful position.

There is no question that I most likely have left someone important off, made a mistake or failed to balance this list. Feel free to correct me in the comments section but please do it with civility.

Ok, lets get to it:

1. Rachel Maddow: Who can argue with this influential and powerful commentator being number one? With her MSNBC perch, she reaches millions and doesn't shy away from being a Lesbian and covering lgbt stories. Her own journey is an amazing story and gives new definition to lgbt power.

2. Congresswomen Tammy Baldwin: Having been in Congress for a decade as an open Lesbian, she has developed a significant power base and respect in the United States House of Representatives. Representing Wisconsin's second district, she has become a close ally of Speaker Nancy Pelosi and is a major point person in the House on lgbt legislation.

3. Hilary Rosen: Without a doubt, one of the most powerful behind the scenes political power brokers in Washington, DC. Rosen's list of friends reads like a "who's who" in American politics both in Washington and the entertainment industry. As a television commentator, she has earned the respect of many in the nation's capital. Is there anyone she doesn't know?

4. Pam Spaulding: Charismatic, kind and powerful are the words to describe Pam Spaulding. Her site, Pam'sHouseBlend.com, has become one of the most well-read and influential blogs in America. Quick with breaking stories, unapologetically liberal and a champion of Transgender rights, she is known for her lack of patience in freedom for lgbt people. Her influence will only grow.

5. Randi Weingarten: As president of the American Federation of Teachers, she is the most powerful open lgbt person in American labor. She is known to be a fierce advocate for her members and fighting for lgbt rights in the American labor movement.

6. Speaker Christine Quinn: If anyone understands power and change it is this Speaker of the New York City Council. For years she has created coalitions for change within the Council and with Mayor Bloomberg. Quinn is always there fighting for marriage equality, marching in Washington and has influence across the country because of work on lgbt rights.

7. Mayor Annise Parker: Who would have thought that Houston, Texas would elect an open Lesbian as mayor? After her stunning victory, she has moved quickly to consolidate power in the city including measures to protect lgbt rights. She can only grow stronger nationally as she moves out of her first year.

8. Rea Carey: As the only Lesbian heading the 'big three' national organizations (The Task Force) in Washington, she is known across the country. Working with grassroots has given her a vast lgbt network. The Task Force's Creating Change is a must-attend conference.

9. Urvashi Vaid: When you list the persons who are the 'conscience of the movement' you would have to put Urvashi at the top. As a foundation head, writer, activist and speaker, Vaid is one of the most respected citizens in America. She was one of the few older leaders who understood the importance of the National Equality March for the nation's youth. They have joined her fan club!

10. Dr. Marjorie Hill: As CEO/President of GMHC in New York City, Dr. Hill is one of the most prominent and respected leaders in fighting HIV/AIDS. She is, more than anyone, responsible for the push for a National AIDS strategy. When she speaks, people listen.

11. Kerry Eleveld: She is the lgbt community's voice in Washington. As a respected and talented journalist for over 15 years she has quickly risen to the top. With White House access, no one has covered the lgbt politics in Washington better than Kerry.

12. Robin McGehee: The first Proposition Eight generation on this list. McGeehee has already been arrested in front of the White House, co-founded and co-chaired "Get Equal" and is the new 'take no prisoners' school of organizing arising from the passage of Proposition Eight. She is a first rate organizer and extremely wonderful human being.

13. Torie Osborn: There would be no modern day lgbt movement without Torie Osborn. As former head of such organizations as The Task Force, Liberty Hill Foundation and The Center, she is one of our best organizers, writers and visionaries. She headed the California statewide campaign to successfully defeat Proposition 64 which would have quarantined people with HIV/AIDS in 1986.

14. Nancy Sutley: As Chairperson of President Obama's Council on Environmental Quality, she is one of the highest ranking open Lesbians in this administration.

15. Kate Kendell: As CEO of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), Kendall has championed some of the pioneering legal legislation to protect Lesbians in America. She devoted endless hours in the attempt to defeat Proposition 8. Her network of Lesbian lawyers across America is impressive.

16. Sheila Kuehl: Pioneer, State Legislative leader, feminist and one of the most respected LGBT leaders in the country. Along with Vaid, she is listened to carefully and respected enormously. She tolerates no intolerance. Kuehl is a principled person with a great set of values.

17. Karen Ocamb: While her blog (LGBTPOV) is relatively new and mostly focused on California, she is one of the most distinguished journalists in our community. She is known for her 'scoops', tough questioning and seeing the 'insides' of a story.

18. Elizabeth Birch: As former CEO of the Human Rights Campaign, she still has a vast network of lgbt activists around the country. She is a talented businesswomen, writer and organizer. She changed the vision of HRC forever.

19. Lorri Jean: As CEO of The Center in Los Angeles, she has considerable power in that city and California. She was one of the leaders of the effort to repeal Proposition 8 and has been head of the National Task Force.

20. Coya Artichoker: A young Native American activist who despite being isolated in Rapid City, South Dakota, has already begun to leave her mark. Creating an organization known as "Sacred Circle" she has worked tirelessly to end violence against Native American women. Look for this young woman to be a major national player in the future.

630 More DADT Discharges Uncovered

Last issue (May-June 2010), Central Voice spoke with former Harrisburg, PA resident Jene Newsome, a 28-year-old aircraft armament system craftsman about her discharged under the armed forces "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Since that story, Servicemembers United, the nation's largest organization of gay and lesbian troops and veterans, recently released a newly obtained document from the National Guard Bureau showing 630 additional discharges pursuant to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law that have never before been counted in the Department of Defense's official "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharge numbers.

The document, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by Servicemembers United, only reports Army National Guard discharges from fiscal year 2004 through fiscal year 2009. Annual discharge numbers from other National Guard and Reserve components have yet to be released.

"These newly released data confirm what Servicemembers United has long suspected – that the official annual 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' discharge numbers are underreported and incomplete," said Alexander Nicholson, Executive Director of Servicemembers United and a former U.S. Army interrogator who was discharged under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell." "The Department of Defense has adopted its own 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy regarding the full and complete disclosure of these numbers over the years, and unfortunately the methodology by which this information has been requested, collected, and assembled by outside organizations has been flawed. What's more is that there are even more discharges that have yet to be disclosed, and we're still working on obtaining those data."

The commonly accepted annual "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharge statistic combines the total number of discharges reported by the Department of Defense for each of its active component branches with the total number of discharges reported by the Department of Homeland Security for the Coast Guard. However, the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Freedom of Information Office has confirmed to Servicemembers United on three separate occasions in late 2009 and early 2010 that the internal source of their annual "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharge numbers is the Defense Manpower Data Center, and that Defense Manpower Data Center statistics do not include discharges from the National Guard or the Reserves.

In April, Servicemembers United released the total fiscal year 2009 "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" discharge numbers reported by the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. Those numbers were 428 and 15 respectively, bringing the "official" 17-year discharge numbers up to 13,425. These newly released numbers now bring the 17-year total number of discharges to at least 14,055.

Info: www.servicemembersunited.org; www.dadtarchive.org

Lawyers Discuss Legal Issues

By Frank Pizzoli

"Growing up in the 80s I was appalled and infuriated at hearing stories of lovers and boyfriends being preyed upon by families and other survivors during the AIDS crisis," remembers attorney William Cooley Jr. He provides pre-paid legal services.

Cooley also witnessed how not having a will or having spousal inheritance rights under the law complicated financial and legal situations of same-sex survivors who lost a partner. "We have our individual rights and freedoms only so long as we know what they are and can fight to defend them and exercise them," he says.

He advises readers that after they have committed their wishes and intentions to paper that they carry them with them wherever they go through a computer service. "One such service is docubank which provides immediate access to wills, medical directives, and powers of attorney so long as one has access to the Internet," Cooley says.

Attorney & Counselor at Law Leo L. Dunn's practice focuses on estate planning with emphasis on working with same-sex couples. "I have also done pro bono work with financial planning and a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" case as well as contractual work for individual clients," he says.

LGBT legal rights of all types are important to Dunn because he's known of "too many youth who have committed suicide or had severe emotional problems" because they couldn't be themselves.

Dunn observes that the repression some individuals grew up with creates distorted perceptions of the world that ultimately hurt both the repressed individual and society at large. "It is important that older, established individuals mentor and assist younger lgbt people so they reach their full potential." Dunn volunteers with Penn State's GLBT Student Center and also mentors law students. "I am also very conscious of the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS since one of my closest friends passed away due to AIDS over 12 years ago."

Dunn recently agreed to serve as the chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Gay and Lesbian Rights Committee. The PBA has been very supportive of lgbt issues for years and has taken a strong stance in opposition to anti-same-sex marriage amendments and other proposed laws that do not treat lgbt individuals as fully equal members of society. "This year the Gay and Lesbian Rights Committee intends to work on school bullying, mentoring of lgbt law students, and educating attorneys on Medicaid issues for same-sex couples.

Dunn also presents Estate Planning for Non-Traditional Couples at Harrisburg Area Community College and will be teaching a GLBT Legal Issues course at Widener Law School beginning in August 2010.

Jennifer A. Snyder, attorney at law with York's Kagen MacDonald & France has handled Name Change Petitions, Amendments to a Name Change Petition to reflect a subsequent sex change, and a Donor Agreement for a same sex couple. Her senior partner Andy Kagen has handled wills, estate planning, partnership agreements, cohabitation agreements, and taxpayer representation before the IRS and Department of Revenue for gay and lesbian individuals. "Kagen has has also provided legal representation to two gay bars in York and has represented gay-owned businesses in mergers and acquisitions," Snyder says.

"LGBT rights are important to our firm for the simple fact that we believe everyone has a right to representation," Snyder says. Historically in our area many law firms are reluctant to represent lgbt individuals, which we find to be very unfortunate she adds.

"On a more personal note, we have gay family members, Kagen has many gay friends, and his wife previously worked for Planned Parenthood, all of which have given us a rewarding opportunity, both professionally and personally, to work with the lgbt community," Snyder says.

"In order for an attorney-client relationship to function properly, it is important that the client feel completely comfortable with his or her attorney. We offer a personalized, experienced, non-judgmental atmosphere for our lgbt clients to feel comfortable and well-represented," Snyder says. Well-known attorney Derek Cordier has handled cases involving divorce, custody, second parent adoptions, two parent adoptions, name changes, wills, powers of attorney, and deeds.

On divorce Cordier says "Both men and women get married and then realize they shouldn't be. They're not only dealing with divorce, but they are coming out at the same time. When kids are involved, the parent coming out may fear the other parent will take the children, which is simply not the case, or the law."

Cordier has represented numerous lgbt clients in custody matters. "One type of custody dispute that comes up often is when one partner has a child biologically and the other partner does not adopt. The parents break up and biological parent does not allow contact between the child and the other partner. The non-biological parent does have rights, but it can be a very difficult and costly case to fight. It is also very emotionally harmful for the child," he says.

Adoptions are Cordier's favorite cases. "The main problem that I run into is that a biological father may change his mind when it comes time to sign over his parental rights forever to the partner of the biological mother. There is no way for biological father to give up his rights prior to three days after the child's birth. This issue is avoided by use of a sperm bank.," he says.

Cordier has seen a lesbian couple use a "male friend" to conceive. "The couple split up prior to birth. No rights were given up, and 'male friend' is now paying child support.

I have also had two men adopt a child who was not biologically theirs. No matter what type of adoption, in my experience, the judges that handle these cases treat everyone with dignity and respect," he says. He has never had a judge do anything that would even look questionable he says. "I have pictures of new parents with the judges hanging in my office to prove it."

Ned Smith Center Receives Education Grant

Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art received a $3,000 Environmental Education Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The Center will use the funds from the grant to provide "Teaching Trunks" for educators, which will be utilized on a free loan agreement.

The trunks will provide resources for teaching students how to monitor the health of streams as they flow into the Susquehanna River and ultimately into the Chesapeake Bay. Two trunks will be developed for elementary students, and two trunks will be developed for junior high students. The components of each trunk will be designed to allow educators to incorporate genuine, field study experiences and learning activities that directly align with PA Department of Education Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology.

"We are thrilled at the prospect of providing these trunks to teachers," says Ned Smith Center Director of Education Beth Sanders. "As school budgets tighten, teachers are often left with very few options to offer their students an opportunity for an authentic field study experience, but these trunks will ease that burden by providing a wide array of activities that can be conducted right in their own schoolyards."

Teachers interested in borrowing a Teaching Trunk should contact Beth Sanders at 717-692-3699 or email her at bsanders@nedsmithcenter.org.

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Book Review:
Local Memoir Details Recovery

"Leave the Light On" is local Jennifer Storm's second book, a memoir of her recovery and self discovery. Curve magazine says of her first book, "Blackout Girl," readers "who have suffered the debilitating after-effects of childhood sexual abuse or faced a descent into additions like the ones that [Jennifer] Storm details, will find much to empathize with here."

Storm writes with humility, wit, and passion a story that depicts the vulnerable state of early recovery from addiction. The reader quickly becomes drawn into her life and wants to know where her newly found insights and skills will take her.

Claudia Black, Ph.D., and author of "It Will Never Happen to Me" says of Storm "By embracing the tools offered in her twelve-step program and meetings, Jennifer navigates through many life challenges that confront young addicts in recovery—old and new friendships, relationships with parents and siblings, sexuality, intimate relationships, school, and career. Her story is captivating and inspiring.

As one of the 30 percent of lesbians who struggle with or have struggled with alcohol and other addiction, Storm reminds us that few books deal with life after recovery. "Where are the books on how one actually lives in recovery?" she asks. "…the rough rollercoaster of addiction is much more appealing to our society's thirst for drama than the years of recovery that must come …[if] one is to truly survive. This book is my survival story…."

On the surface it's a gritty story. A young girl, innocent of the joys and terrors life offers, numbs herself daily to block out her harrowing experiences. After Storm endures a brutal rape when she's semiconscious from a drinking binge, the trauma and humiliation of that rape begin to drive her further into her addictions.

Rehab is her only way out—a solution paved with pain, suffering, and often, relapses. But the author has made it through and is "floating on the pink cloud" of successful recovery as this book opens.

Storm shows how former addicts must leave behind much of their lives if recovery is to succeed—and old and valued friendships are the most difficult to lose. But when these friendships are based on "partying" and getting high, they can't be continued. Because Storm's addictions began so early, it was especially hard for her to float down from her "pink cloud" of recovery and start over with a clean slate, leaving many friends and a whole lifestyle behind.

Through the use of flashbacks and old memories, Storm literally reconstructs her life throughout the book, and the reader is privy to her failures and successes. The stories include the loss of her best friend, the end of a long relationship with a man she just didn't love, the uneasy relationship with and the death of her mother, the acceptance of her sexuality as a lesbian, and the beginning of a college career at Penn State (rated the "top party school of 2010" by the Princeton Review).

Readers will applaud Storm as she experiences several relationships, learning along the way how to love and be loved. The book ends on a high note as Storm graduates from college and steps into a challenging government job in Harrisburg, PA.

"I am one of the lucky ones," says Storm in the Epilogue. "I got sober at a very young age, and to this day, have managed not to pick up a drink or a drug. I treasure and protect my recovery with the fierce knowledge that without it—I have nothing."

LEAVE THE LIGHT ON: A Memoir of Recovery and Self-Discovery by Jennifer Storm
Central Recovery Press; $14.95, Paperback

Killian is VIP

By Jorge Treviano

Killian Wells is shaking up airwaves with a catchy new single and music video that shines the spotlight on today's celebrity obsessed culture, "V.I.P.".

"My biggest career goal is for Perez Hilton to draw a penis on my face because that's when I'll know I've made it," joked the singer at the announcement of "V.I.P." in New York. Killian's crass attitude and outlandish clothing have already caught the attention of bloggers, but it's his "electro-pop with an urban edge" tunes that are raising eyebrows today.

"I wanted to create a fun party song that depicted today's celeb lifestyle," continued Wells. "I'm thrilled life is starting to imitate art in my career."

According to Wells, being V.I.P. is a state of mind. "You can be broke and still be a very important person if you carry yourself with confidence. In Manhattan, it's cool to be a struggling artist. "

Growing up, Killian knew early on that he didn't fit in a small-town lifestyle. "It was tough being the freak, wearing Diesel in an area where cow dung on jeans is always in style."

At 14, against his parent's wishes, he dropped out of high school. Killian didn't want to be a part of "a system designed to condition followers". He turned to what he refers to as a life-learning program; first making frequent trips to Manhattan to study music and eventually moving there. Creating music has always offered solace to Wells, who has suffered from panic attacks since he was a boy.

"Manhattan may not be my hometown but it's where I grew up because the city allowed me to find myself."

By 15, Killian Wells was working with pop producers from around the country. He was even approached by a well-known manager who offered him a gig fronting a reincarnation of The New Kids on the Block in Germany. The group hadn't even been formed but a record deal with a major label and a reality show was already in place. Killian passed on the opportunity when he learned he wouldn't be allowed creative input.

Though a proud party-boy, Killian Wells is not afraid of hard work. He insists on having a hand in everything that touches his music career, including designing his clothing and art directing his photo shoots. He is adamant that a pop artist's job doesn't stop with the music.

"I may not always take myself seriously but when it comes to my career, I am no joke," he confirms. "Ultimately, I strive for one thing - to move people with my music."

"Even if it's only for three and a half minutes at a time."

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